

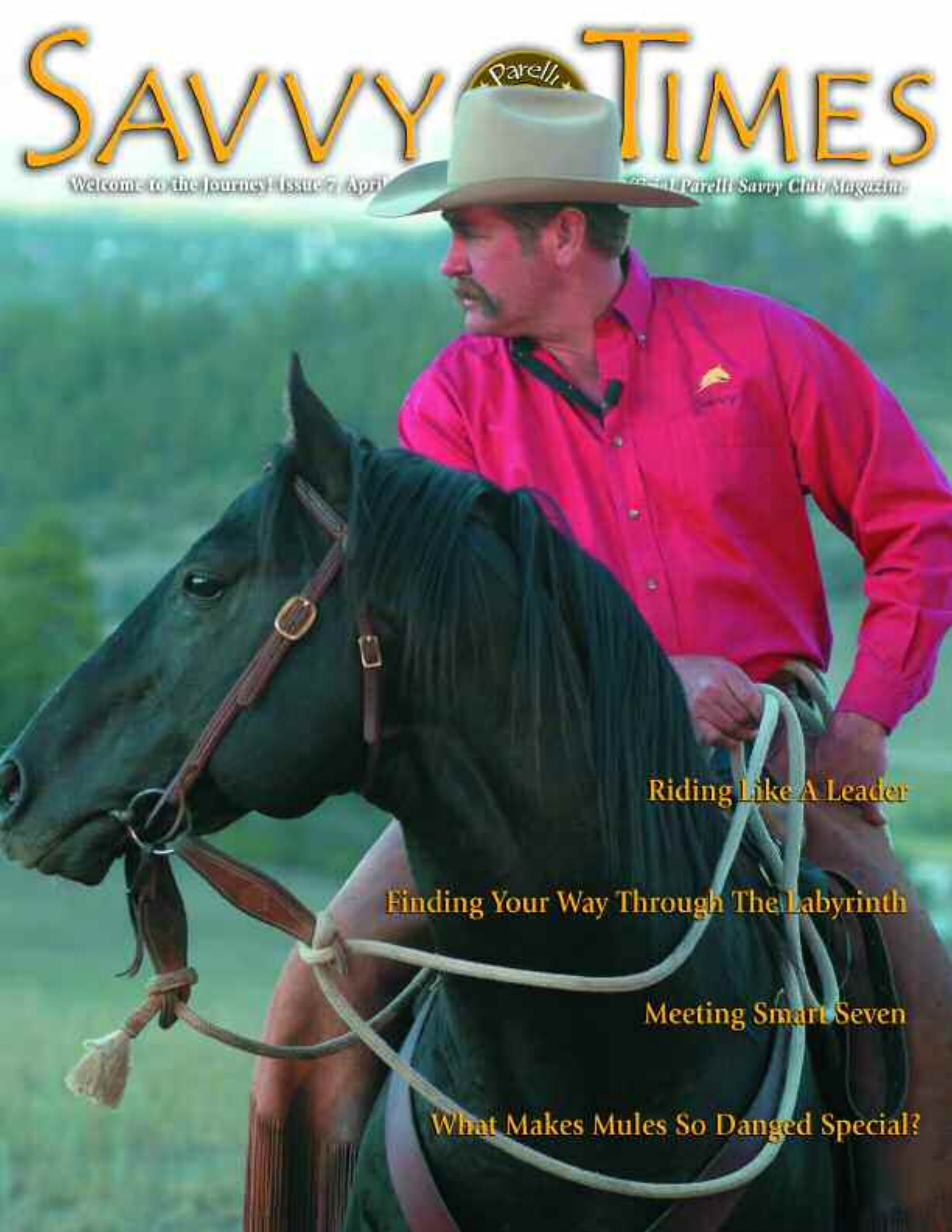
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SAVVY TIMES

Welcome to the Journey! Issue 7 April

Official Parelli Savvy Club Magazine



Riding Like A Leader

Finding Your Way Through The Labyrinth

Meeting Smart Seven

What Makes Mules So Danged Special?



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2005 Tickets: \$65; \$35 each for groups of 10 or more; \$100 at the door.

SAVVY TIMES

The Official Parelli Savvy Club Magazine

Issue 7, April 2005

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Pat Parelli & Casper at the Pat Parelli Center
in Pagosa Springs, Colorado





Some of you may have seen photos that have zipped around the e-mail universe showing a small, non-descript, run-of-the-mill-looking brown mule killing a mountain lion. The story goes that a group of hunters and their dog were trekking along a trail when the mountain lion appeared, probably hungrily stalking the dog. At least that's what the hunters surmised.



The horses scattered to the winds, doing what horses do so well – relying on their survival instincts. The mule proceeded to buck off his rider (deliberately, the rider said, so the mule could be free of the human burden and challenge the mountain lion). The mule attacked with teeth and hooves, even going to his knees (saddle and pack and reins and bit and all) to slash and tear at the big cat's throat.

After I got over my oh-my-gosh reaction (and realizing that perhaps the photos could have been altered), I started thinking about mules. What, exactly, makes these animals so different from horses? What is it about these hybrids that's so unusual? Could I ever be wise and savvy enough to own a mule? What does it take to be a "mule person?" (And I say that with all due respect and awe.)

I've only had the privilege of riding a few mules in my lifetime, so I decided to ask the "most mule man" I know these particular questions. Of course that mule man is Pat Parelli. If you don't know Pat's history with mules, get his new book "Raise Your Hand If You Love Horses" and read his captivating stories about his performance mules. Pat's answers to my questions appear on page 27 of this issue.

There have been times when a phone call changed the entire script of my life. (Would you like to make a presentation for Princess Aliah of Jordan at the Royal Arabian Horse Show? Princess Anne would like to have breakfast with you and will meet you at her stable tomorrow morning. How would you like to be head veterinary secretary on a 3,000 mile horse race?)

I view every ringing of the telephone as yet another opportunity that will add an exciting chapter to my life, or to my life's work. So when the phone rang the other day and it was a producer from CBS's "The Early Show," I was elated! The producer wanted to know if Pat Parelli would be willing to appear on the show in front of an audience of several million viewers. "Are you kidding?" I thought to

myself, my heart pounding, breath panting. "He'd be delighted!" I said. Then the jigsaw puzzle started to unfold – the appearance was next week (yikes!), we couldn't do a live broadcast from Florida like Pat wanted (Pat had to actually go to the CBS studio in New York), Pat wasn't able to go on the day they scheduled (he and Linda were flying to Europe, so CBS jiggled everything around to accommodate our schedule), flights had to be arranged, Pat needed 'wardrobe consulting,' press kits needed to be sent to the producer, film footage of the ranch and courses needed to be edited and sent to CBS – so as you can see, as the (paraphrased) saying goes, it takes a village to get Pat on television.

The story is a poignant one: A 17-year-old young lady, who has cerebral palsy but competes on horseback against able-bodied people and wins, has dreamed for years of coming to the Pat Parelli Center in Colorado. CBS and Pat Parelli made that dream come true. You may read more about this wonderful story on page 52 of this issue.

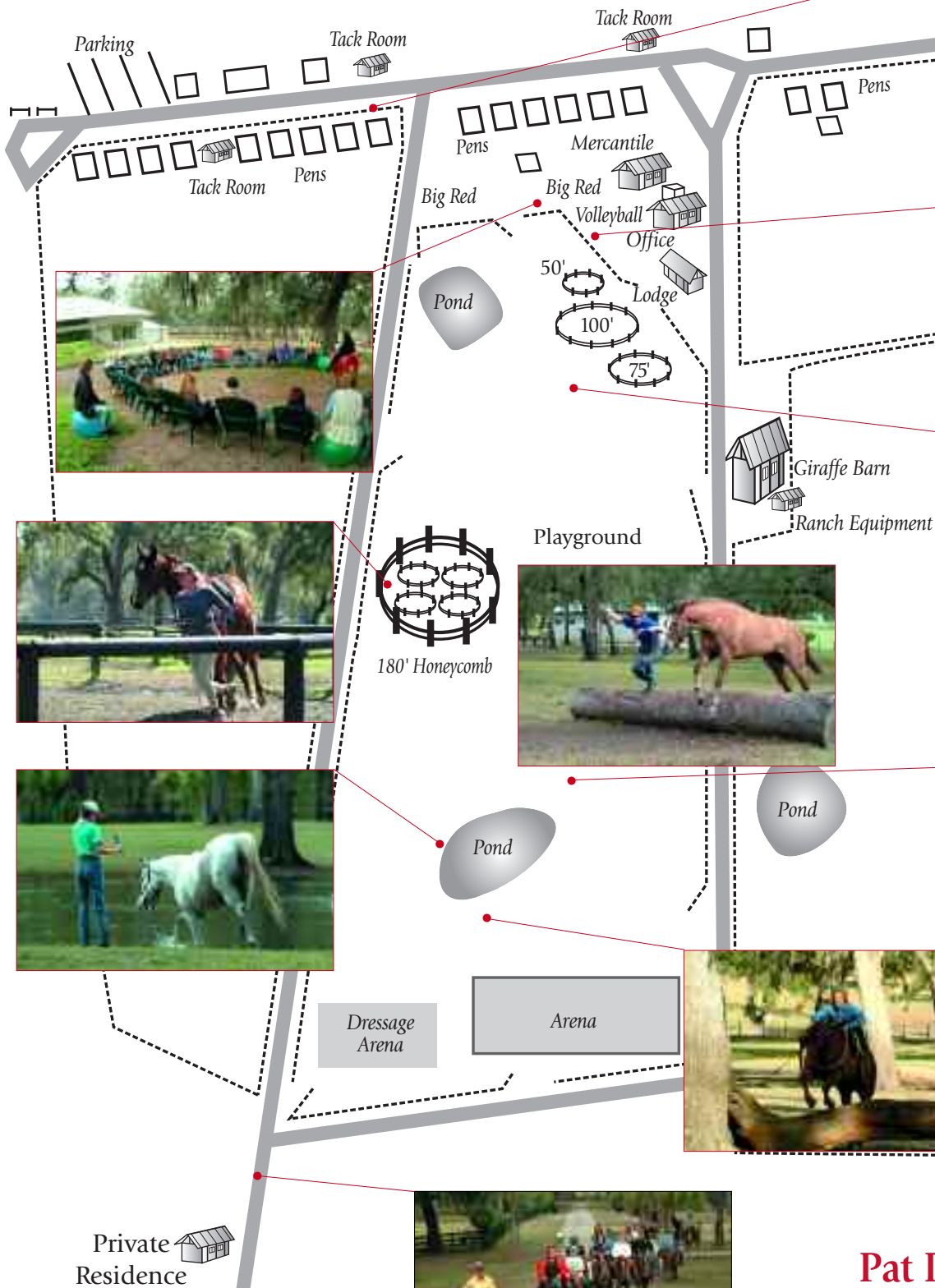
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It's a gorgeous spring day as I write this. The three horses in my front pasture (two of them of the geriatric variety) were either rolling or frolicking just a moment ago (the 32-year-old still runs like the wind and can buck almost as spectacularly as Pat's horse Casper), but now they are lined up in a row, the sun glinting off their coats, their mouths plucking the most tender of the grasses. I remember my dad saying that all was well with the world when the horses have their heads down and are grazing. And so it is in this moment that all is well with the world. I wish the same for you and your horses.

Happy spring, happy journey with Parelli...

Kate





180' Honeycomb



Pat Parelli Center
FLORIDA



SADDLING ACCIDENT: PARELLI TO THE RESCUE!

I have hard-fast, proof-positive of just how good your program really is!

I have a four-year-old Quarter Horse gelding. He gets right-brained, becoming very nervous and jumpy. He also has a trust issue with people and is easily frightened, being very leery of strangers.



Level 1 changed that dramatically. We started Level 2 ground work and it was then that he began challenging the relationship,

nipping and throwing out a front foot in protest. I used backing him out of my space and body blocks, and for the past two weeks I've not seen that behavior.

Two days ago, I had saddled him and had him free lunging in the round pen with no halter. Suddenly the off-billet came loose. (Of all the thousands of times I've saddled a horse, don't ask me what happened, but obviously I did something wrong and I will never forgive myself for being so stupid!) The saddle fell, but was still held on by the breast collar. It came down in front of his chest and front legs. Of course this terrified him and he took off running, rearing and striking. When he got to my end of the corral I stepped toward him and said, "Whoa!" He stopped on a dime and never moved. He became totally left-brained, stood there and let me undo that entire tangled mess (including a leg through one of the stirrups) and never moved. After that he stuck to me like glue. He allowed me to immediately re-saddle him (untied), and we rode for nearly an hour, working on some Level 2 prep exercises. He was calm as could be. What I wouldn't have given to have that all on video!

I believe so much in your program, and after this it's been cemented into my brain forever. Thank you for your help and for making this program available. I absolutely love it!

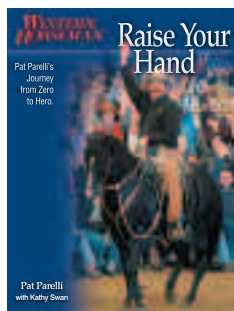
— Marliiss Van der Zwaag,
Orange City, Iowa

PUTTING THINGS INTO PERSPECTIVE

Yesterday I curled up with "Raise Your Hand If You Love Horses" and read the whole book cover to cover. Getting immersed in Pat's personal journey was an extremely rewarding experience for me. The trials and tribulations that might have knocked him off his path were real, and what a loss for natural horsemanship that would have been!

Reading the book put my own small frustrations and occasional petty thoughts about Parelli into such perspective. My suggestion to those of you who get frustrated with 1) Parelli or 2) yourselves or 3) other people in Parelli, read the book to get yourself back on track. If we as students can have just 1/1000 of Pat's drive and the belief that we can change our individual small worlds in regard to horsemanship, Pat will have accomplished what he set out to do.

— Kristi Schaaf



MUSTANG SUCCESS STORY

You saved my horse's life!

I met Pat at Equitana in 2000. I was exhibiting my older Mustang, Maverick, for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Our booth was close to the Parelli booth and I came over to see what all the excitement was. I studied the materials, watched Pat do several demos and talked to him several times. I bought the Level 1 program and tools and was excited to sign up my young Mustang, Tomahawk, for a clinic with Neil Pye. What a great day that was!

Tommie had major issues with humans. He was very wary, worried and often tense. Bridling was frightening and confining to him. Once mounted he did his work very well... IF I got all the way in the saddle, that is. Sometimes he would bolt out sideways just as I swung into the saddle. More than once he darted off at speed heading for a wall with me half on, half off. I was dumped off at speed four or five times in three months, and decid-

ed that my 50+-year-old bones were not going to take any more.

I had already taken Tomahawk to (another famous trainer). When (the famous trainer) met us he said, "Oh, I don't DO Mustangs... not enough people have them to make it worthwhile in my show." (This trainer) did work with my horse privately in the round pen. After letting Tomahawk off lead, it took him and two wranglers 30 minutes to catch him.

I still needed help, so I found Pat Parelli.

The clinic with Neil Pye was GREAT! Neil used Tommie as his demo horse. Neil helped me through the Seven Games and on the second day I saddled Tommie, but I wasn't confident enough to ride him for long. The single rein and halter felt scary to me.

At home, I still made mistakes and occasionally frightened Tommie with my lack of savvy so I still got dumped off a few more times, but I was gaining the knowledge I needed to become his partner. I passed Level 1 on Maverick. I still try out new methods first with Mav and then Tommie. That good advice is also part of the Parelli Program.

Riding Tommie became less stressful and more enjoyable. I was a woman on a mission, though. I wanted Tomahawk to join my other horse foxhunting.

Unfortunately I broke my leg in a hunting accident on my seasoned foxhunter, Maverick. While recuperating a wonderful Parelli student, Kimberly MacAloon, played with Tomahawk for me. She brought him almost through Level 2. Her skill and experience gave Tomahawk the confidence and trust he needed in humans.

When my leg was strong I began riding Tomahawk and doing clinics with John Harms and Terri Palmer. Now I enjoy trail riding with Tomahawk. He has learned to do dressage and jumping and began foxhunting. This spring he started three-day eventing. At the Barrington Mini Event Tomahawk was second in dressage and first in cross-country!

Several trainers told me to get rid of Tomahawk, that he would never be safe to ride. They wanted me to sell him for bucking stock. Can you imagine the daily fear and awful life that would have meant for Tommie?

The Parelli Program has helped ME learn to work with horses. Before I just rode "made" horses. Now I have a part in helping a frightened animal become my partner. I will always be grateful. Thank you for your skills, your willingness to share them, and your genuineness and kindness.

— Jean Turnmire, Riverside, Illinois

TRAIL RIDING FEAR

Reading Stephanie Burn's article on fear (Savvy Times, January 2005) brought to mind many times in the past when fear not only kept me from doing certain things with my mare, Candee, but swelled inside and consumed me long before even getting near her. Fortunately, after practicing Level 1 and now starting Level 2, many of the previous 'fear-factors' are gone.



What I find interesting is that previously my mare clearly sensed my fear, and being the smart horse that she is, seemed to capitalize on it. She figured out

that if she starting jerking her back leg around when I went to pick it up, that I would drop it, fearing that I would get kicked. Her stepping aside when I went to reach for the girth always had us cautiously dancing around the center aisle. She told me of many 'don't touch me there' spots with just a swish of her tail, and I was quick to oblige and back off.

Through the Parelli Program, both Candee and I have gained tremendous confidence in ourselves and trust in each other. Now she knows her 'back-off' tactics won't work, and I know she's really not a vicious horse out to kill me. Now she walks up to me in the field, stands ground tied while I completely groom and saddle her, and follows me at liberty.

This is all wonderful in the arena, but how about out on the trail? My fear of taking Candee on the trail has me shaking in my boots! She can be calm one day and spooky another. And when she spooks she twirls and shakes all over. It is VERY difficult to remain

calm yourself (no less in the saddle) when the horse is going berserk!

Which brings to mind another thought about fear: which comes first the chicken or the egg; in other words, the horse fear or the rider fear? Is my initial fear creating her fear or is her fear causing mine? It is a Catch 22 that we can't seem to get beyond! Coincidentally, not only did we used to go on trail rides all the time without fear, but I can hop on any other horse and ride off into the sunset perfectly calm. My greatest hope is to calmly trail ride once again on my favorite mare. I just ordered Stephanie's book "Move Closer, Stay Longer" and although I know it will be inspiring to face 'fear-factors,' I hope it helps lead Candee and me back down the trail together.

— Laurel Moore, Madison, Virginia

SOMETHING WAS MISSING... BEFORE PARELLI

I know this is what you probably hear all the time, but I felt like the two days I was able to see Pat and Linda at the Equine Affaire has changed my life with my horse.

I am a 44-year-old mother of three who started riding about 8 years ago. I have had lots of different lessons and the one thing that has always gone through my mind is: What do I want to really do with my horse? I have done the show thing – and I do it with all my heart, but I feel like something is missing. We trail ride, have tried eventing, ride both English and Western... still something is missing.

When I saw Pat and Linda, I now know what was missing. What I really enjoy most about my horse is just being with him. The Parelli Program is my missing link, and I feel like I am finally at peace with where I want to go with my horse. Thanks.

— Carrie Whalen, Colton, New York

SIMULATIONS HELP STUDENTS RELATE

Wow! Larry and I just finished watching the DVD #2 from the new Level 1 series on training tools and the pop-bottle game. We've both trained horses for many years. The hardest part as an instructor was to help the students relate to what you're trying to get them to feel and connect with the horse. I'll never have that problem again. What a tool!



Larry and I have always been frustrated with the fact that we'd train someone's horse, show them what

the horse could do, have them ride it, then it would be almost a month and they'd call to say the horse does this, or bucks, tries to run off, or whatever. We knew it wasn't the horse, but most people just knew that THEY couldn't be doing anything wrong. Finally we wouldn't work anyone's horse who wasn't willing to come over and learn what the horse knew.

We had 40 head off and on for the three years we ran the stable at Turkey Run State Park. It was during this time that we heard about your clinic at Decatur. We closed early that day, took several employees with us to become spellbound at the show. Even though we'd been up since 4 a.m., we stayed until the end and on the way home, talked, shared and couldn't believe what we'd just seen.

We've tried to pass on what little we know to others. Because we know what it feels like to want to learn and when we actually do accomplish that special bond with our horse, it is so hard to explain it to others.

Thank you for making it so understandable, reachable, and usable.

— Judy and Larry Gates, Kingman, Indiana

REFLECTIONS ON NATIVE AMERICAN BLESSINGS STORY

I wanted to respond to an article I read in the Savvy Times, "Native American Blessings Transform the Pagosa Ranch."

My husband, our two children and I moved to our new ranch three years ago in Chewelah, Washington. The 75-acre ranch was called the "Buffalo Ranch." Although our ranch is very beautiful and seems perfect in every way, we suffered a series of bad luck and horrible health since we moved in. We began to sense some kind of curse was on the land and often talked of finding a medicine man to help.

As we heard more and more from neighbors who knew the previous owners of the "Buffalo Ranch," we had a sinking feeling.

Letters continue on page 42.

"Attitude is everything!"

That is a direct quote from a 5th grade student in my class after experiencing live, the "pop bottle demonstration" shown in the new Parelli Level 1 program. It came from a student with a definite attitude that teachers prefer not to have displayed in their students.

After studying the Parelli Program for almost five years now, I am finally nearing the end of Level 3, I hope! Since the beginning of my journey with Parelli I have been trying to transfer the principles that I have been learning into all areas of my life, with very little success. I was having great success with my human/horse relationships, but not much improvement in my human relationships. I kept telling myself that horses were just easier and less complicated than people. In reality it was just an excuse to not change my own undesirable attitudes.

I was introduced to Parelli by a colleague when I was on the spiraling path of huge teacher burnout. I was totally frustrated with the system and with my students as well. It seemed like no matter what I did it was a failure, and I wasn't doing much better with my horses.

I was a bit of a skeptic when my friend invited me to a Parelli clinic. I was so surprised by what I was seeing, and I was hooked immediately; it all looked so magical. However, I found out that attitudes don't change easily or quickly.

It was difficult to let go of old habits and ideas. For example, I rode with the rope halter over the top of my bridle and bit. I simply didn't trust my horse, myself, or the validity of the principles I was learning. After a couple of months, I realized that I hadn't needed the reins that were attached to the bit one single time. My actions seem so silly to me now, and I am even embarrassed to admit it. However, it was a necessary step in the process of changing my attitude to "TRUST THE TEACHER."

Over the past five years I kept asking myself, "when are the love, language, and leadership skills I seem to display so easily with horses going to start transferring to my human relationships, like Pat says they will?" In the past few months, I finally realized that it wasn't the skills that I was lacking, but the attitude!

It was easy for me to have a good attitude with horses, because I love them so much, and they are a deeply imbedded passion in my heart. I had empathy for the horse that I didn't have for people. Now that I have begun to soften my attitude, the love, language and leadership skills that I have developed with horses are finally beginning to transfer to my human relationships!

The students in my class learned so much about themselves by participating in the "pop bottle experiment" as they call it. They discovered that they have to

go through some negative feelings as well as positive ones in order to be successful learners. We came up with a slogan from this activity to hang on our wall:

"You must actively participate with energy and curiosity to learn, but
ATTITUDE IS EVERYTHING!"

It has taken commitment, persistence, perspiration, and trust in the Parelli principles, plus a few horses and a 5th grader with an undesirable attitude to give me the courage to change my attitude and finally transfer love, language and leadership skills to all areas of my life.

I know that I have not arrived yet, but I do know that it will always be my attitude at the beginning of any difficult task, which more than anything else, will affect its successful outcome.

— **SHERRY JARVIS, BURWELL, NEBRASKA**

In my fifty-plus years, I've gone through a lot of attitude adjustments; some were easy, some painful, but all of them were instructional in one way or another. When my wife told me we were driving into Oklahoma City to see Pat Parelli, my attitude was "Oh, yeah... the guy that sells the books and tapes." On the way to see Pat, I figured I could attend Saturday's session and then wiggle out of Sunday's. My wife, Missy, was thinking, "If he doesn't want to come to the second day, I'll go by myself." So, I started out with a bad attitude, but after two hours I knew that I would be back the next day. What I didn't realize at the time was how profoundly *my* attitude would change in the process of attending the Love, Language, and Leadership sessions or how profoundly committing to the Parelli Program would change my horse and me.

I had actually watched the Level 1 video the previous summer and seen the little books but, at the time, I didn't really buy into it. I was busy ponying a two-year-old, bay Quarter Horse. Comet came into our life because he was the grandson of my wife's stallion. Unfortunately, he brought with him a bad attitude, no manners, no respect, and no skills. What I didn't realize was that I was pretty much in the same situation: I had a bad attitude and no skills.

Most of the early work I did with Comet was just getting him used to being handled. The first day I went to put a halter on him, it took 45 minutes; the second day it took about 20 minutes. From then on, he was pretty good at letting me walk up to him. Most of the groundwork consisted of tossing a line all over him and getting him to stand still. Picking up feet was a major chore and he hurt my back twice by leaning on me. Somehow,



through all this, I'd managed to pick up a couple of hints about stepping on and riding, so I didn't have any major disasters – except for the day he went to bucking and I bailed off and tattooed my left armpit with a rusty portable panel.

Things really changed when we moved from rented stalls to a place of our own. Everything was new except the attitudes. Comet's attitude and my attitude had stayed the same. When I would walk by his stall, he would pin his ears back and come at me with bared teeth. Instinctively, I struck back or yelled at him. After about another 60 days of that, Dr. Phil's question popped into my mind: "And how is that working for you?" I knew something had to change; most likely it would be attitude, but I wasn't sure how all that was going to happen.

When Missy and I left day two of the Love, Language, and Leadership session, we had the Level 1 and 2 tapes and books. This was the beginning of major attitude adjustments for my horse and me. Of course, reading about the games and actually performing them is two different things. There were days Comet would bolt and take off with my brand new shiny lead rope sliding through the mud. But our attitudes were changing.

Toward the end of Level 1 I still wasn't sure how much progress I was making. One day, while pushing the wheelbarrow to the manure pile, I felt a nudge on my left shoulder. Thinking Missy had snuck up on me to scare me, I was shocked when I turned around and it was Comet – wanting to play. I pushed the wheelbarrow about halfway back to the barn, stopped, and saw that he was following me. It took me that long to realize that he wanted to play. So, we played the Driving Game out there in the pasture – our first at liberty lesson (even though it was unplanned). I would give him a Schwiagemutter look in Zone 4 and around in circles we'd go. I was running as fast as I could and he was out-running me (actually, he was giving me the other eye). I ran backwards and he followed me; I jumped to the left and then to the right – and he would mirror my actions. This was visible, on-the-hoof proof that Pat's lessons were working for me and changing attitudes. This colt needed someone to play with!

We went through Level 1 in about five months. Charging ahead, I started into Level 2 and hit a wall. Comet and I both needed time for the Level 1 lessons to sink in. So, some days we would only play for about 20 or 30 minutes. I wasn't happy with the way he backed up, but he had accepted being led by the front leg, so I set up cones and ran through them. I would run backward and use the Carrot Stick to make him go right and left; sometimes I would run forward and he would put

his nose next to my right shoulder and trot through the same pattern – all of this with the lead rope tied around his neck. That was a significant attitude change from the same horse that went bolting around the arena dragging my new Parelli lead rope in the mud.

Now that it's late January, it's too cold and too wet to do any work in the arena, so we play extended friendly games in Comet's stall. Doing that is an attempt to continue changing attitudes about stall manners. Through the Parelli Program, he's become very curious about what I'm up to when I'm actually not doing anything. It's a toss-up as to whose attitude has changed the most, but one thing is for certain: Comet's attitude and my attitude have both changed for the better. Natural is the only way.

— **STUART TICHENOR, HENRYETTA, OKLAHOMA**

Although my attitude towards horses totally changed when I started the Parelli Program, it wasn't until a couple weeks ago that I realized exactly how a horse's attitude about the human world must be.

On this particular night, I was outside feeding my horses in the dark. There had been a recent story about a woman in a near-by county who had gone into her barn one night and was killed by a cougar that had climbed into the rafters. We have a three-sided pole-barn with a lean-to that my horses can go in and out of, which means that one side is completely open for vicious people-eating lions to wander into. To make matters worse, in order to turn on the light, you have to walk about halfway into the barn and search for the light switch.

Well, after hearing this story, as you can imagine, I was a little more cautious about walking into – what I was thinking could be – a "barn full of killer lions!" After I survived the difficult feat of turning the light on, I looked all over the rafters searching for you-know-whats! There were none, but the entire time I was out there I was glancing around for "man-eating beast" and thinking, "if a cougar is ever hiding out here when I have to feed the horses, I'll be cat food!"

It was while I was standing with one of my horses that I realized I was experiencing the kind of fear that a horse lives in! This was how a horse feels about everything! Everywhere they go they have to worry about being killed! It was a terrible feeling! Since then, I've been able to understand better just how scary things seem to a horse. And to think that this is how horses perceive me (at first)!

Now I can truly understand the attitude that horses have about life and I can better adjust to help our communication improve profoundly. When my horse doesn't seem to be doing what I'm asking, instead of having





an attitude of, "Why can't you understand what I'm trying to get you to do?" it's "Okay, let's stop for a while so I can figure out what I'm doing wrong so I can prove to you that what I'm asking you to do won't kill you!"

Because of the new outlook I have on a horse's point-of-view and attitude on life, my horses and I have progressed incredibly in the last couple of weeks. Now, I'm just waiting for better weather so we can start progressing even more!

— **COURTNEY SPERRY, 15-YEARS-OLD, MINNESOTA**

P.S. I loved the 45 L's for Linda in the last Savvy Times! I'm working on memorizing it along with the 45 P's!

Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary defines "Attitude" as a mental position with regard to a fact or a feeling or emotion toward a fact. One could conclude that *attitude* is a human's state of mind or a human's emotional state when dealing with some external stimulus. In this case the stimulus is a horse.

I have been dealing with a number of facts (horses) over the last 39 years. My *attitude* towards horses has been scattered (defined as 'not under control'). My wife Donna and I have owned Walking Horses for all of these 39 years which includes my one-and-a-half years of showing.

The purpose of having the horses for me was to have an activity to relax from the rigors of making a living. The problem here is the more dedicated one is to making that living, the less dedicated one is to relaxing. Therefore the *attitude* never did really get to the point where I was relaxed. After 30 years of working and now retired, the *attitude* has changed rather significantly. Still, the knowledge base that I had, did not help the *attitude* when trail riding. So I thought maybe showing horses is another way of being an owner but not having the responsibility of daily training. The problem with showing horses is with humans who consider themselves horse trainers. Predator is a much better word.

I (we) have been retired for the last nine years. This has given me a chance to take the time to analyze my position in regards to my horses. Five years ago we had the opportunity to attend a one-day clinic sponsored by Parelli. We had attended clinics prior to this and had used some techniques that we had learned. This was all well and good for my horses, but there was still something missing. If you guess that an *attitude* change toward my horses was in order, then you get a red string. I believe the Parellis call this transition a "macho-ectomy." I worked for the last 20 years of my career as a senior manager – I essentially told humans what to do and when to do it. My horses didn't cater to the same kind of management style. I left the one-day Parelli clinic

with an entirely new *attitude*, not to mention the strings, sticks and videos.

Attitude is something that, to me, humans have to work at on a continuum. The process never stops. *Attitude* reflects principle number eight: "Principles, purpose and time are the tools of teaching." This also reflects the time spent to develop the partnership with my horse. In these last five years I have learned what Donna already knew and tried to pound into my head. Without the "macho-ectomy" and help from principle number eight the *attitude* would still have a ways to go.

You know you have achieved some modicum of success with *attitude* when you leave a Parelli tour stop with tears in your eyes and consider yourself *natural*. Through determination and perspiration my Walking Horse and I achieved a red savvy string for the Level 1, a blue savvy string for Level 2, and we are working on completing Level 3 by the 2005 Savvy Conference.

— **BILL COON, UTAH**

The more I learn about the Parelli program the more amazed I am at its brilliant simplicity and the perfection of Pat's principles. Everything in the program is so intriguingly interrelated: the concepts of Love, Language and Leadership, the 8 principles, the 8 responsibilities, even the concepts contained in Pat's 45 P's, all are beautifully blended and precisely presented, from their order to their organization. I dare say they are inspired; a word I use with reverent appreciation.

Our attitude can be either the key that will unlock the door to our understanding, or the lock that will keep us from realizing what is possible. Our attitude can lead us on a journey of exciting discovery, or keep us tethered in tradition and mired in mediocrity. I believe that love is the key to developing the attitude that can set us free. Love does not come before language and leadership by accident. It is love of the horse and of the opportunity we have to develop a partnership with them that should cause us to approach them with an attitude of seeking to understand their need for self-preservation. It is love that tells us it is our responsibility to learn the language of the horse's feet and to realize that when the horse does not do what we ask it is not the fault of the horse; love looks inside our self for the answer (put your finger on your chin and say, "How interesting").

Love is what should guide our attitude of leadership; it is what teaches us to be effective with our language "without getting mean or mad." Like a parent helping a child learn to walk, love is what leads us to learn how to be kindly consistent, passively and patiently persistent in the "proper position;" to prepare the horse for success through its own pressure and wait for our idea to

become his idea... we wait for him to find his way because we have faith that he will; this is the attitude of justice. It is this love that teaches us the difference between cause and make, between let and allow. It is our attitude, motivated by love, that causes us to commend the horse's curiosity and to nurture and celebrate its spirit; it allows us to ask the right questions and search for the answers; to learn the language, to struggle and grow through our fears as we lead the horse over, around and through its fears because if the horse can, we can. Love leads us to hope, to discover, because it can see what is possible and we want to achieve it... for love of the horse.

— DAVID SAUER, LEONA VALLEY, CALIFORNIA

As a kid, I had more attitude than most. I hid from my peers, didn't care to be noticed, but put me on a horse and I could do anything. I rode wild ponies like Alec in "The Black Stallion" and got bucked off every day, but I didn't care. I was happy riding or mucking stalls, or just watching them graze. For me, it didn't get any better than that.

I think I must have been in high school when my attitude changed, and not for the better. I had a tumultuous adolescence and a miserable home life. My pony, a 13hh mixed breed, became more than freedom; he became an escape. I knew that if I did well in school I could get a good job somewhere far, far away. The only job I could imagine myself doing was training horses. Suddenly, I wasn't satisfied with my horse unless we were "working" on something. I became a perfectionist, a nit-picker, a micro-manager. I must have been my horse's worst enemy.

I went to college to study for an equine profession. However, the more I learned and the better my technical riding became, the less confidence I had. My years of riding wild and free had nothing to prepare me for the future. I finally ended up 1200 miles away from home and working in a factory.

I didn't have a horse for four years, and then I bought two Arabian geldings, barely halter broken. I received Pat's book as a Christmas gift and later purchased the Seven Games video. I enjoyed the results I got with my horses on the ground, but the long hours in the factory gave me plenty of time to drift back to my old dreaming ways. I couldn't be happy as a casual horse owner. I wanted more.

Suddenly I wanted shows. I wanted recognition. I wanted success. I stopped enjoying my horses just for their companionship. I'd go out to the barn and find my horses sweaty or dirty. I'd cop an attitude. Stupid horse, how was I going to have time to ride if I had to clean up all this mess first. I'd begin grooming only to find a huge

chunk of mane I've worked so hard to grow had been rubbed out. Again, I'd cop an attitude. Stupid horse.

Then, I wanted to ride. I'd spend 20 minutes trying to girth up my horse who refused to stand still the whole time. Attitude. Stupid horse. Don't you know I only have an hour to ride? Finally I'd climb on. His mouth gapes, his tail switches, and by the time he stops bucking at the canter, we'd be racing around the pasture like lunatics. I stayed with him. Stupid horse.

One day a friend came by to watch me ride. I trusted his opinion because he'd been showing Arabians his whole life with a fair amount of success. He dismissed most of my horse's antics as hereditary (he trained my gelding's sire) but off-handedly mentioned, "Maybe you should try to keep your leg off of him a little more." I grinned, but my attitude was, "Don't tell me how to ride." Then, when he's not looking, I try it. I think I feel a difference.

My attitude starts to change. I start to wonder if maybe I am the reason my horse is crazy. Maybe he's trying to tell me something is wrong. Could my micro-managing ways still be affecting my horsemanship?

I turned on RFD-TV. I discovered the pushing passenger lesson and the trotting game. Two months later, I am riding my horse with just a halter and lead rope, and I never have to take the slack out of the rope. If he breaks into a canter when we're playing the trotting game (sometimes for an hour), I laugh. I can bring him down by exhaling through my nose (yes, that's really all it takes), or I can practice simple lead changes.

I don't think of groundwork as a waste of my riding time. I think of it as adding quality to my riding time. Sometimes I play on the ground for 45 minutes and ride for only 15. I am okay with that. I haven't been to a show yet. I may never have to. I get the recognition and success I need from the Savvy Club, for now, anyway.

The horse is now to me what he was when I was 12 and life was good. He is a conduit through which I converse with the grass, sky, wind, and trees. He tells me when I am right and when I am wrong. In that way, I suppose, he is a direct link to God. A room full of trophies and gold cups is worth nothing if the horse that won them cannot make you feel closer to God, or if time spent with that horse is more about not dying than it is about living.

Thank you, Parelli, for helping me get in touch with what I was really looking for all these years. You helped me change my attitude, gave me the motivation to follow my heart, and the humility of knowing that my heart and my horse were right all along. My horses are worth more to me now. So is my life.

— TRACY HORTON, COLLEGE STATION, TEXAS



Each issue of Savvy Times features a particular subject to which our readers can respond. The deadlines following are when your 250-word submission must be received to be considered for publishing.

July Issue:
Knowledge May 16
October Issue:
Tools Aug 15
January '06 Issue:
Techniques Nov 14

Please send submissions via e-mail to: savvyclub@parelli.com or via U.S. Postal Service to: Savvy Times, c/o Parelli, PO Box 3729, Pagosa Springs, Colorado, 81147. Thanks!

Riding Like A Leader

by Linda Parelli



You may have your horse's respect on the ground, but does he see you as a leader when you're in the saddle?

The Eight Responsibilities

There are four responsibilities for the horse and four for the human.

FOR THE HORSE:

1. Don't act like a prey animal.
2. Don't change gait.
3. Don't change direction.
4. Look where you are going.

FOR THE HUMAN:

1. Don't act like a predator.
2. Have an independent seat.
3. Think like a horse.
4. Use the natural power of focus.

More information about the Eight Responsibilities can be found in Level 2 and both the January & April 2004 issues of Savvy Times.

Taking leadership from the ground into the saddle is an important thing. At this stage you've probably become quite efficient at controlling your horse on the ground, but if you have a sensitive, unconfident, spooky or over-exuberant kind of horse, you'll need to understand some important principles in order to move forward successfully... and preserve your confidence.

Horses need leadership both on the ground and in the saddle. Leadership is essential to them in the wild; if they don't have a leader they will become one and make all the decisions as to when to go, when to stay, and when to run. So if you don't lead, they will. Much of this program is about you learning how to become a leader for your horse.

Your leadership tends to be challenged in certain situations. When everything is fine, everything is fine! But when a horse feels unconfident, scared, spooked (right brain) or wants his own way (left brain) there are some golden principles to observe.

THINK LIKE A HORSE

Responsibility #3 of the Eight Responsibilities is "Think Like a Horse." In situations where your horse suddenly speeds up, overreacts, spooks – what do you think your horse is feeling? Fearful and unconfident horses are the most likely types to exhibit these behaviors, so pulling back on two reins actually worsens the problem because they feel trapped.

When a horse gets scared his NUMBER ONE REACTION IS FLIGHT – RUN AWAY! They are not thinking and plotting, they are reacting! It's all out of self-preservation – the instinct to survive.

When horses get scared, they are going to run. The more you hold them back, back them up, or try to stop them, the worse it gets because they NEED TO MOVE THEIR FEET. The only way to try to understand what they must be going through is to put it into perspective for yourself. Imagine you are walking through a graveyard with a friend and there's a sudden noise or image that scares the life out of you! Your instinct is to take off out of there as fast as you can, but just as you launch yourself your friend grabs you by the collar and holds you back. At that moment you'd probably believe it was a ghost and your fear would escalate into sheer terror.





Above: Linda demonstrates Lateral Flexion. A neutral, controlling rein position used to stop.

Pat demonstrates the Indirect Rein, an active, leading rein position used to pivot the horse and give him time to start thinking again.

Panic is not a logical thing. The adrenaline produced by fear kicks in well before you can rationalize what's actually going on, because that takes a little time. This is where your horse is, and given horses' hyper perceptiveness to the environment, changes, movements and sounds, they probably are reacting to things you didn't even notice.

So, think about it from the horse's point of view and don't blame him for being fearful. Commit to learning how to help your horse become more confident about himself and in your leadership, and therefore less reactive.

ONE REIN FOR CONTROL – IT DISENGAGES THE HINDQUARTERS

When you 'bend' a horse's head around it disengages the hindquarters, taking the power away. When you pull on two reins, it actually engages the hindquarters and adds power to whatever the horse is doing – positive or negative. Worst of all, holding the reins with two hands automatically causes you to pull backward on them in almost any situation – when your horse spooks, when he surges forward or turns sudden-

ly, when you lose your balance, when he's not doing what you want, etc. You feel as though you've got control, but in reality, your horse gets progressively WORSE. Every time you prevent a horse from moving his feet he becomes more unconfident, more fearful and more reactive, so he keeps having problems.

When you pull back on TWO REINS your horse feels trapped because you stop his feet and hold him back from moving. So the PANIC BUILDS, and the horse becomes right brain. When you pull on ONE REIN you turn your horse into a tiny circle but he can

keep his feet moving; the PANIC DISSIPATES and he becomes left brain. Allowing those feet to move is the secret, but controlling where they move is equally as important! Don't let them run off! Cause the feet to "run away" in a tiny circle with the Lateral Flexion rein in extreme situations. Use the hindquarter disengaging Indirect Rein in less threatening situations.

LATERAL FLEXION VERSUS INDIRECT REIN

Lateral Flexion is a neutral rein position. Its purpose is to stop the horse's feet when the horse is ready to stop. It doesn't force the feet to stop moving immediately, but it stops them from running off. Once the horse's emotions start to come down, the feet will stop.

The Indirect Rein stops the horse from running forward, but unlike Lateral Flexion it asks the horse's hind feet to keep moving while the front feet virtually pivot. It's an active rein. In both cases the horse crosses his hind legs as he moves and the constant turning triggers the left brain to become active. In other words, it gives the horse time to start thinking again.

The difference between the two is that one is control (Lateral Flexion) and the other is leadership (Indirect Rein). So the secret is when to use what!

WHEN TO USE LATERAL FLEXION, WHEN TO USE INDIRECT REIN

Use Lateral Flexion in situations where the horse wants to run, buck, rear – more serious situations. The goal is to save your life and your confidence by stopping the horse from taking off, but at the same time dissipating the panic in the horse. It also gives you the opportunity to jump off on the same side as your horse is bent which gets more dangerous to do as he gains momentum when running off! I've become very good at this because the moment I feel the horse starting to run and I can't bend him to a stop (because I've got a Savvy String around his neck or I'm bridle-less), I'm off like a shot – I'm off with the first out-of-control step. When you're bending your horse to get control, think this: I don't blame you; I know you need to move your feet, but let's run off in this tight circle rather than for half a mile or more!

Use the Indirect Rein in situations of mild spook, when the horse gets a little high-headed or you feel his attention drift away from you. Simply reach down and turn him in circles, yielding the hindquarters for as many revolutions as it takes before your horse can do them calmly. I say this because the first turn or two (or more!)

could be a bit rushed. It's important to keep him yielding his hindquarters until he can do it in his left brain. All the while think these thoughts: What I'm asking you is more important than what you think is scary.

WHEN RIDING AROUND, USE A CASUAL REIN

The Casual Rein is held in one hand, close to the mane, elbow kind of straight. The reins are loose and you have the opportunity to quickly reach down with the other hand and bend your horse to control him with lateral flexion or hindquarter disengagement. The opposite is holding the reins close to your body or in two hands.



It's a good idea to set yourself up for success, which means avoiding situations that would automatically cause you to do the wrong thing. The worst of these is holding the reins in two hands because it becomes an automatic reaction to pull back on both. It's actually very hard to just take one rein. Holding the reins in the Casual Rein position can be so difficult to do when you don't feel safe, but you need to really 'get' that you are riding a prey animal and it's not about you! In order for you to survive you have to help your prey animal survive; that's your job as leader. Most importantly, if you don't feel safe using a Casual Rein position you shouldn't be on your horse in this situation. Holding your horse with two reins is a sure sign of your distrust or lack of confidence in a certain situation, unless you're doing it for backing up, going sideways, or for collection – which you'll learn more about in Level 3.

IF YOU CAN'T RIDE YOUR HORSE ON A LOOSE REIN, YOU SHOULDN'T BE RIDING HIM

Oh, is this ever the hardest thing to recognize, especially the more your self-confidence builds! I've done it myself. I think that if I have shorter reins I can react more quickly. And maybe I can, but the underlying truth is that I really don't trust my horse enough to give him full rein. So the ride is peppered with moments of tension and spooking and fits of exuberance like leaping in the air, and I just tolerate it because it's "not that bad." The point is, if you think it's no big deal or that you're minimizing the effect – you're wrong. Unattended behaviors tend to worsen over time so everything you do should be directed at getting things to be better. So if your horse keeps spooking, keeps leaping in the air or bucking even if not scared, you need to reevaluate what you're doing.

Be committed to riding on a Casual Rein on trails, during FreeStyle riding exercises – actually it's a good test in any situation because you can immediately tell when the situation is not safe. The moment you feel like shortening up the reins you have a decision to make: bend and disengage to a stop (Lateral Flexion), disengage the hindquarters but keep them moving, or get off and help your horse become left brain again using emergency ground skills (backward, sideways, obstacles, etc.).

What usually makes you feel like shortening the reins is the feeling of tension in your horse, so instead of trying to live through it, think about actually doing something to change your horse's behavior. For example, as soon as your horse looks off at something or tenses up, do three or more hindquarter disengagements (Indirect Rein) and then move on. The secret is to do as many as it takes until you feel your horse relax his body and stop rushing or bracing through any part of it. Then you can turn his head loose and carry on, still being ready at any moment to reach down and repeat.

The worst thing you can do is ignore it and think everything will be okay. You might be fooled this time but in the days, weeks and months to come, things will get worse. You don't want to wind up saying, "All of a sudden for no reason at all, my horse totally flipped out, turned into a scared maniac and now is afraid of everything!" These things build up in a horse. You need to know the early warning signs so you can deal with them and never have to go there!

When your horse gets tense while riding do something to change his behavior like getting off and helping him become left brain again using emergency ground skills (backward, sideways, obstacles, etc.)





TWO REINS FOR COMMUNICATION

Even when handling two reins, think about it as communication rather than control. For example, even when you are going sideways or backward, your reins need to move with the horse's front feet. It's a Fluidity principle: Whatever you want your horse to do, you need to do in your body first. Your horse's front legs are your arms and hands. You need to have a little motion in them to indicate what you want your horse to do. The moment you use those reins for holding back an emotional horse, you're in trouble.

Learn to feel the tension and bracing in your horse. Look and feel for signs like the head going up, a tense jaw, working the bit, bracing of the ribs, quickening of step. At this moment, activate one rein and disengage your horse until you feel his body relax. Pet him and continue being ready at any time to deal with his emotions as they come up.

It's so important to realize there are three parts to your horse: The mental, emotional and physical horse. No matter what you are doing, when the emotional horse surfaces, you have to deal with that. Forget everything else and take care of it. If you don't, it will come back to haunt you.

DON'T WAIT FOR THE INFERNO; DEAL WITH THE SPARK

Do less sooner so you don't have to do more later, because it's much easier to put out a spark than to deal with a wall of flames. The MOMENT you feel your horse get tense DO SOMETHING. If all you did was simply disengage him, moving his hindquarters



More information on
Lateral Flexion and
The Indirect Rein can
be found in Level 1 of
Pat Parelli's Program

until you felt his attention turn to you instead of whatever he thought was the problem, you'd be way ahead. Pretty soon your horse will get used to paying attention to his leader all the time and that spooky or distracted behavior will diminish.

No matter how advanced you think you and your horse are, this is something you can never neglect. If that annoys you, get a calmer horse or get a motorbike! If you want all the pleasures horses can offer, you have to take responsibility for doing your part in the partnership.

HERE'S A STORY!

When I first started the Parelli Program I rode for three months with one rein to break my habit of using two reins – that means I began most of the Level 2 tasks with just one rein (and a Carrot Stick, of course)! You may not have to go to that extreme, but I knew how strong my tendency was and I was committed to breaking that habit and really becoming the kind of rider my horse needed.

The interesting thing is that when I reached Level 4 and began playing with dressage concepts again, I rode with two reins too much and when Remmer spooked I made my collection/rhythm task more important than his feelings. Bad mistake! It took about two months for him to get my attention by spooking more and more regularly, and when he did it during one of our Love, Language and Leadership seminars, I finally woke up. He was usually so calm in front of audiences and “suddenly” he was looking into the crowds and freaking out. Oh boy, I ate humble pie big time.

I spent lots of time thinking about it and talking to Pat. What it boiled down to was that I made the pursuit of my goal more important than my horse's feelings.

The moral of the story is to take care of your horse's feelings whenever they emerge, no matter what. They are more important than your goal, and they are more important than someone else's opinion. If you take care of your horse's mind, emotions, and body, he'll give you everything you want... willingly. 🐾



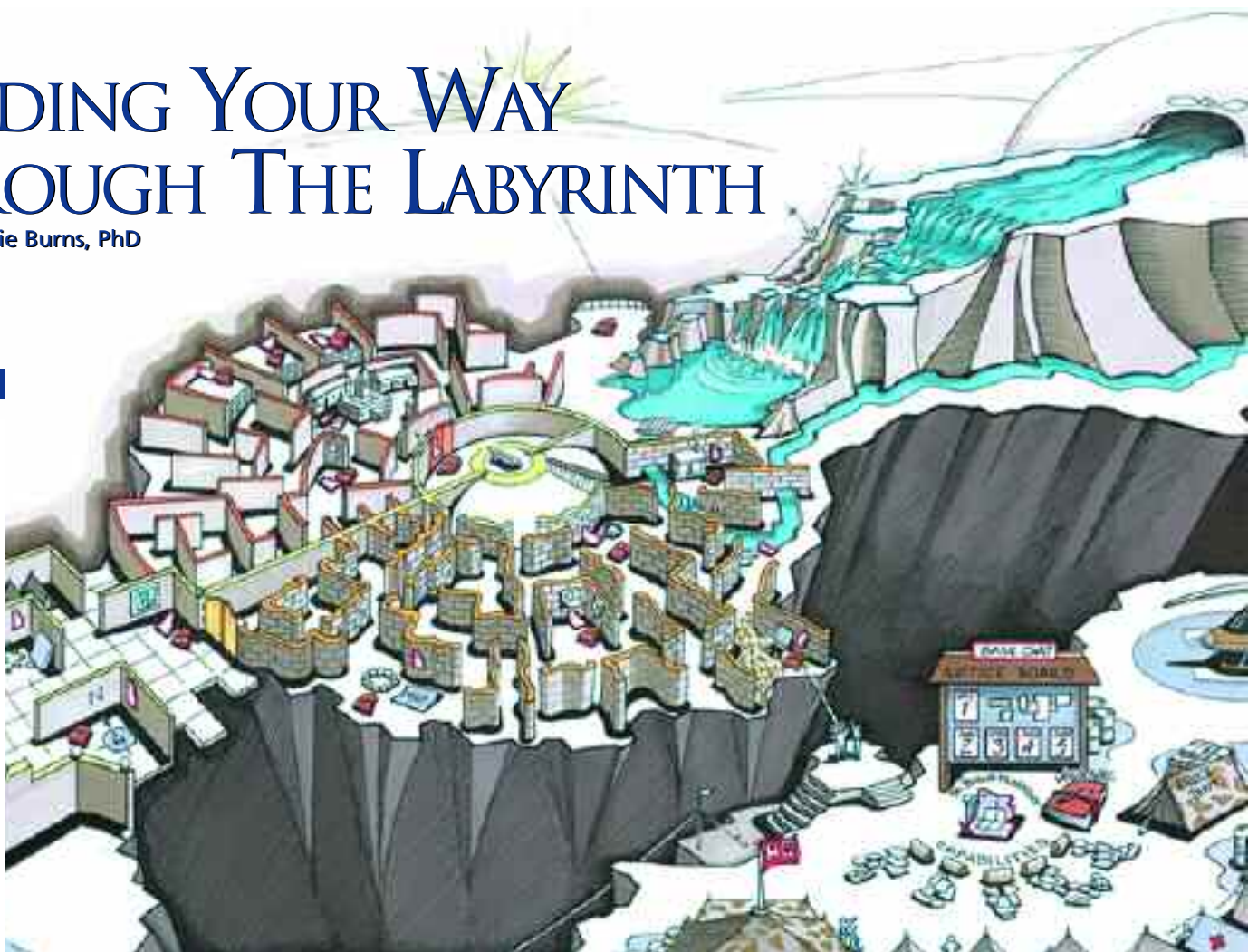
FINDING YOUR WAY THROUGH THE LABYRINTH

by Stephanie Burns, PhD

"I've just completed The Labyrinth online course. I ummed and ahed about doing this since it was first advertised, but as I felt I was finding excuses not to do some of the tasks I was finding challenging in the Level 2 program, I knew that I'd bite the bullet and do it.

"I'm really pleased with the results. It's made me more aware of the way our brains work, and it gives you strategies to help bypass the avoidance tactics your brain comes up with. I don't regret laying out the cash. At the time it was either adding to the Parelli training fund or do The Labyrinth. Now I've got the strategies to work on the training I've already had, and it's given me the push to get out there and chip away at the tasks I've found difficult or boring."

— Janet Evans



If you have read my earlier articles you are likely cottoning on to the fact that I have a fascination for human behavior. I am bursting with curiosity about what rests behind and motivates people's actions. I read hundreds of e-mails from Parelli students each month and sometimes the theme is about the actions the student is taking, and in many cases the e-mails are asking for support caused by inaction – or avoidance.

As learners it is easy to find ourselves behind an invisible barrier of our brain's nature – a nature that at its best supports us to be safe and comfortable. But as you know, learning requires that we frequently experience some form of discomfort. When that occurs, our brain, in doing its job, makes it easier to sit on the couch than take the next step on the path of our horsemanship goal.

I am equally fascinated by the stories people tell about their behavior. The "theories" people have about why they do what they do are very interesting. And, I must say, that although these theories "feel" right to the teller, under scrutiny they are found to be a far cry from what is actually going on. Ask any Labyrinth graduate!

Graduates of "The Labyrinth" online course take an

incredible journey through the workings of their own brain and how what goes on there affects the actions they take and the ones they avoid. For the first time, they genuinely understand what drives their behaviors of procrastination and quitting while in the pursuit of a highly desired goal. For the first time they can do something about it. And, they are.

THE HISTORY

I taught a course through the 1980s and 1990s called "Learning To Learn." By now most of you have heard of it from casual comments made by both Linda and Pat Parelli. Tens of thousands of adults completed this course and loved it. Just get Linda chatting about it one day and you will get the whole story.



The aim was to help adults re-evaluate their concepts and experiences of learning and to develop better strategies. My book "Great Lies We Live By" covers some of this territory and readers are familiar with those ideas now.

But at the time I was teaching Learning To Learn and wrote Great Lies, I was under an illusion. There IS some-

thing important about teaching good learning concepts and skills, but the problems were in my assumptions about what would happen once adults were in possession of that knowledge and those skills.

I believed that if you gave adults the strategies they needed to succeed, and they were confident, then they would go on to succeed. I REALLY did think that if a person KNEW for a fact they could achieve what they wanted to achieve, they would do it!

Well, hah! I was NOT right about this! The research to test my belief netted a rather interesting and eye-opening finding.

I discovered that nearly 75% of the adults surveyed who had willingly and desirously chosen to engage in a personal or professional goal FAILED to achieve that goal. It didn't matter if it was a goal to sew a button on a shirt, play a song on the guitar, or to achieve Level 3 in the Parelli program!

This AMAZED me! So much so that I spent from 1994 through 1999 studying this phenomenon. That research shed new light on the behaviors of procrastination, motivation and goal achievement. It is this work that is at the heart of The Labyrinth experience.

THE LABYRINTH ONLINE COURSE

A very rich description of The Labyrinth course is located online on a simply designed page. It is best that you go there for that information; there is much to know and many questions you will want answered before committing to join us on this learning adventure.

Going to this page is also your FIRST Labyrinth-like experience.

What does it take for you personally to take the action of visiting that page?

Do you go there right now without delay?

Do you tell yourself you will do it later?

If so, do you actually get around to it?

If so, what does it take for you to actually do this later?

What kinds of things did you say to yourself?

If you haven't done this in a week but you really meant to do it, what do you think that means and why do you think it happens?

I can hear The Labyrinth graduates laughing! They know the answers.

Graduates of the course no longer have naive thoughts about goal achievement and motivation. They understand the richness of the process that rests behind action and avoidance. Life and its goals are no longer hit and miss for them, they know how to initiate and sustain action – even when those actions are boring, frustrating or confusing as many goal activities are.



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"This is no lie, no quick fix, no gimmick. Doing The Labyrinth Online Course will change your life forever.

"When my Levels horse died just over a year ago, I picked myself up with help from Stef's online help on the Parelli website. I enjoyed her Savvy Times article about crossing the 'silly bridge' and her book 'Great Lies We Live By,' so I was intrigued by The Labyrinth course and was encouraged to take it by 3-Star Instructor Inge Sainsbury. For the first time in my life I truly understand how the brain can work 'for' and seemingly 'against' you.

"The Labyrinth is a journey of self-discovery, but what makes it so remarkable is that each step of the way empowers you. What you learn in The Labyrinth will affect every aspect of your

life – how you approach difficulties, how you go about daily tasks, your work and significantly for Parelli students, how you deal with the program.

"The course was simple to do in terms of time and commitment and the materials are easy to use. No specific computer skills are required and it is interesting and fun. Checking in daily and then writing up the journal became a part of the day I looked forward to.

"The impact has been so great on our particular course that almost half the team are part of an on-going online support group set up by one of our members.

"At last I can see how to make my dreams come true. Thanks Stef! And thanks to the team."

— Judy Patterson



The Labyrinth graduates will not be found sitting on the chez lounge dreaming about taking action with their horse or only talking about it. They know how to get out to the paddock. And, they don't have inaccurate ideas and false excuses about their behavior. They know the truth about what drives them and how to control their brain for the benefit of achieving the goals they set.

I believe every person born should have the knowledge and skills necessary to get where it is they say they want to go. I can feel a profound sadness when I see people struggling with issues related to motivation and learning. These are so simple to solve with the knowledge a few of us in education have today. I remain committed to getting what I know in the hands of all those who are trying to get somewhere 'good' in their life.

It is your turn now. Visit the Parelli website, and click on the link

to my page. There you will find your way easily to discovery about what The Labyrinth holds.

You will learn everything you need to know about the course and can send me questions from that page if necessary. You will find the aims of the course spelled out in plain English, a journal of graduate comments to explore, and the details you need about the cost, payment schedules, start dates, enrollment deadlines, time commitments, technology requirements, and the expectations of you as a participant.

I personally am involved with all of the Parelli teams through The Labyrinth. I chose to do this because we have such a strong connection through Pat and Linda and the horses. So I will be there for every step you take on the journey. New teams gather for a start every 6 to 8 weeks. You'll find a list of the next start dates on The Labyrinth description page.

If you've enjoyed my books, then imagine what we can do together in a shared learning experience over many days. It is a learning adventure that can change your life. Having this knowledge has certainly changed mine. 🐾





Jake and Shorty at the 2004 Parelli Savvy Conference in Colorado
(read Shorty's story on page 30)

Where are you originally from?

I was born in Australia and lived there my whole life until I came over here in 2001. I was in the Parelli school for one semester, and then I worked in Florida. Parelli helped a few of us from Australia get our visas. So I've been here since February 2003, and I'll go home in February 2005. Then I'll be coming back to America, to Parelli.

Your mom, Sue Shoemark, is the assistant to the dean of the Pat Parelli Centers and head of the tour department. From what she's told me, it sounds as though she started you with Parelli when you were about nine. So you've been around the Parelli program for almost all your life.

Yeah, I met Pat when I was ten or eleven. I remember being there, but I don't actually remember meeting him. I've been around it ever since.

What are your long-term horsemanship goals?

Mainly getting good at starting horses and foundation training.

Those are the two areas that I really want to excel in. Roping is also an interest of mine.

What's one problem you've experienced as a student and how did you overcome it?

The biggest problem for me was getting used to being around groups of people. I struggle with being around people all of the time. I'm a bit of an 'I' person. I like to stick by myself. Here, there's a lot of 'we' people. Being able to fit into the team wasn't hard but becoming comfortable around a lot of people at once was. I'm getting better about it, but if there's a choice I'd still be by myself.

What's the most valuable thing you've learned?

The main thing I've learned is to give the horse the opportunity he deserves to learn. A lot of the time most humans, including myself, rush things because you want the horse to do it, and you're not giving him the chance to learn it. Once I started changing my ways, thinking things like that, I understood why a lot of things weren't working. I allowed other things to work, and tried not to force them.

Do you have any of your own horses here?

No, one horse I ride is a Quarter Horse named Scrappy. He's almost five. He's been a really good challenge. He's not a difficult horse. He has a lot of try, but I was a bit hard on him at first. I didn't allow him enough time to learn. Now he's coming along really well.

Who's the first horse you took to Level 3?

I got my Level 2 here at the Parelli Center so the first horse would be Dot. She's a horse here at the ranch, and she's in the lease program now. The main goal with horses, especially for us at Pat's Foundation Station, is to get them safe and consistent enough to come up to the main ranch. Now I see Dot out there in the lease program, and it's good to know that I did a consistent job so other people can get on her and get the same results. That's what it's about. If you use the program and ask the horse the right way, they'll do it for you.

What's a day in your life like?

It varies. Sometimes I get up and go shoe a horse at 5:30 in the morning. Then we have to feed horses, put them in pens, maybe catch Pat's horses and get them ready all before breakfast. Back at the Foundation Station you ride your best horse first, and then you work your way down. At the moment I've got five or six horses to play with a day.

The horses you ride in the morning will take less time because they're more developed. In the afternoon you play with young horses, colts or problem horses. I end up playing with horses until about 8:30 at night.

Then you have to clean up manure, make sure everything's tidy and put away, and check that the horses are fed and watered. Then we go have dinner, maybe stay up late for a while and get up early again. You'll be tired. It's a full day, but it's fun. It goes fast.

Being raised on Parelli, has this always been your career path or did you have other dreams?

All I ever wanted to be in life was just a farmer or horseman or both. That's all. If I had to go and farm cattle and sheep for the rest of my life, that would make me happy. As soon as I finished school I went to work for eight months driving heavy earth-moving equipment just to earn enough money to come over here. Since then I've been here, and I knew what I was going to do. However, it ends up I'll be doing something with horses or farming. That's the only thing that will get me out of bed that early in the morning. 🐾

name

email

web

phone

5-Star Premier Instructors

Dave Ellis

rangerdave@parelli.com

parelli.com/rangerdave

661-391-8672

Date	Course	Location	Days	Contact
4/21/05	Advancing Horsemanship	Denver, CO	4	Jody Grimm • 303-431-7739 • Jody.Grimm@Juno.com
4/25/05	Advanced Level 3/4	Denver, CO	2	Jody Grimm • 303-431-7739 • Jody.Grimm@Juno.com
5/4/05	Advancing Horsemanship	Sturgeon Bay, WI	7	Kris Fulwiler • 920-487-5623 • kris@starryknightfriesians.com
5/17/05	Mustang Viewing Ride	Inyo National Forest, CA	4	Robin Berry • 661-548-6114 • LSRanch@Parelli.com
5/24/05	Advancing Horsemanship	Cedaredge, CO	7	Gary Vickrey • 970-856-3453 • GVEZPAGE@aol.com
6/1/05	Level 1	Windom, MN	2	Jennifer Thompson • 507-381-6684 • parellimn.homestead.com
6/3/05	Level 2	Windom, MN	2	Jennifer Thompson • 507-381-6684 • parellimn.homestead.com
6/5/05	Level 3	Winfom, MN	3	Jennifer Thompson • 507-381-6684 • parellimn.homestead.com
6/8/05	Cow Working	SD	3	Jennifer Thompson • 507-381-6684 • parellimn.homestead.com
6/8/05	Cow Working	MN	3	Jennifer Thompson • 507-381-6684 • parellimn.homestead.com
6/12/05	Level-3 Clinic	Wentworth, NH	11	Chris Newbert • 603-764-5905 • chris@rstours.com
6/25/05	Advancing Horsemanship	Antioch, IL	4	Ted Axton • 847-395-1309 • taxton@fnbeo.com
6/28/05	Level 1 Clinic	Antioch, IL	1	Ted Axton • 847-395-1309 • taxton@fnbeo.com
6/30/05	Advancing Horsemanship	Wolf Creek, MT	6	Margot Doohan • 406-586-4262 • foxnbull@in-tch.com
7/7/05	Cow Working	Laramie Peak, WY	4	Terry Brooks • 307-684-7771 • tbrooks@trib.com
7/11/05	Adv. Horsemanship/Cow Wrkg	Laramie Peak, WY	5	Jody Grimm • 303-431-7739 • Jody.Grimm@Juno.com

Neil Pye (ISC Dean)

npye@parelli.com

970-946-4573

David Lichman

david@davidlichman.com

www.davidlichman.com

916-648-1092

Date	Course	Location	Days	Contact
4/2/05	Level 1 Ground Skills	Oroville, CA	2	Sherry Fabela • 916-648-1004 • info@davidlichman.com
4/16/05	Trail Camp or L2/L3 Course	Newnan, GA	3	Karen Jones • 770-251-1799 • kjpuzzles@mindspring.com
4/22/05	Level 2 Harmony Course	Honeoye Falls, NY	3	Karen Jones • 770-251-1799 • kjpuzzles@mindspring.com
5/6/05	Gaited Horses Naturally	Pleasant Hill, MO	3	Karen Jones • 770-251-1799 • kjpuzzles@mindspring.com
5/14/05	Level 2/Level 2 Advancing	Andalusia, AL	3	Karen Jones • 770-251-1799 • kjpuzzles@mindspring.com
5/20/05	Level 2/Level 2 Advancing	Midland, MI	3	Karen Jones • 770-251-1799 • kjpuzzles@mindspring.com
5/25/05	Spring Horse Camp	Hayfork, CA	5	Sherry Fabela • 916-648-1004 • info@davidlichman.com
6/6/05	Lessons	Red Bluff Area, CA	1	Sherry Fabela • 916-648-1004 • info@davidlichman.com
6/10/05	Western States Horse Expo	Sacramento, CA	3	Sherry Fabela • 916-648-1004 • info@davidlichman.com
6/17/05	Gaited Horses/Mixed Levels	Boise Area, ID	4	Teresa Ruth • 208-796-2236 • horsesnaturally@earthlink.net
6/25/05	Mixed Levels Course	Sprague, WA	3	Lori Reith • 509-253-4425 • randlrieth@huskies.net

4-Star Senior Instructors

Carol Coppinger

carol@carolcoppinger.com

www.carolcoppinger.com

615-444-2039

Date	Course	Location	Days	Contact
4/2/05	Level 2/3 Clinic	Mt. Juliet, TN	4	Les Coppinger • 615-444-2039 • les@carolcoppinger.com
4/17/05	Level 2 Camp	Mt. Juliet, TN	4	Les Coppinger • 615-444-2039 • les@carolcoppinger.com
4/23/05	Level 2/3 Camp	Mt. Juliet, TN	4	Les Coppinger • 615-444-2039 • les@carolcoppinger.com
4/30/05	Level 2/3 Camp	Mt. Juliet, TN	4	Les Coppinger • 615-444-2039 • les@carolcoppinger.com
5/7/05	Level 1 Clinic	Bristol, TN	2	Patty Wilson • 423-753-2228 • jnsbjack@msn.com
5/9/05	Level 2/3 Clinic	Bristol, TN	2	Patty Wilson • 423-753-2228 • jnsbjack@msn.com
5/13/05	Level 2/3 Camp	Rocky Ridge, MD	3	Jim Hackett • 301-271-7395 • redrock3@msn.com
5/21/05	Level 1 Clinic	Toledo, OH	2	Nicole Pelchat • 419-861-3200 • naturalhorseplay@aol.com
5/23/05	Level 2/3 Camp	Toledo, OH	3	Nicole Pelchat • 419-861-3200 • naturalhorseplay@aol.com
5/28/05	Level 2 Camp	Mt. Juliet, TN	4	Les Coppinger • 615-444-2039 • les@carolcoppinger.com
6/4/05	Level 1 Clinic	Cincinnati, OH	2	Carol Goebel • 513-877-2758 • savvyon@direcway.com
6/6/05	Level 2 Clinic	Cincinnati, OH	2	Carol Goebel • 513-877-2758 • savvyon@direcway.com
6/8/05	Level 3 Workshop	Cincinnati, OH	1	Carol Goebel • 513-877-2758 • savvyon@direcway.com
6/11/05	Level 2/3 Camp	Remington, VA	4	Marj Cassetta • 540-399-1800 • bediamdog@adelphia.net
6/18/05	Level 2/3 Camp	Mt. Juliet, TN	4	Les Coppinger • 615-444-2039 • les@carolcoppinger.com
6/25/05	Level 2 Camp	Mt. Juliet, TN	4	Les Coppinger • 615-444-2039 • les@carolcoppinger.com
7/5/05	Level 2/3 Camp	Iron Ridge, WI	3	Laurie Hills • 920-349-3185 • lhills@charter.net
7/9/05	Level 1 Clinic	Lebanon, IN	2	Susan Moran • 317-896-3912 • suziehorse@aol.com
7/11/05	Level 2 Clinic	Lebanon, IN	2	Susan Moran • 317-896-3912 • suziehorse@aol.com
7/16/05	Level 1 Clinic	Fairbanks, AK	2	Gail Jensen • 907-457-2438
7/18/05	Level 2/3 Camp	Fairbanks, AK	3	Gail Jensen • 907-457-2438

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Parelli Professionals



3-Star Endorsed Instructors

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| Don Halladay CAN | www.donhalladay.com • 403-844-7940 |
| Aimee Brimhall | www.pnh.50megs.com • 406-449-0279 |
| Jennifer Vaught | www.angelfire.com/mo2/pinedell
816-540-3566 |
| Jonathan Field CAN | www.jonathanfield.net • 604-857-1831 |
| Linda Green | lindagreen.parellinet.net • 602-232-2738 |
| Don Knapp | www.knapparelli.com • 580-622-2027 |
| Sharon Lindy | www.horseplaygrounds.com
940-637-2694 |
| Bruce Logan | www.brucelogan.us • 440-543-0408 |
| Doreen Matheson | doreenmatheson.parellinet.net
775-238-5236 |
| Pat Mitchell | patmitchell.parellinet.net
818-768-4399 |
| Teri Palmer-Sprague | www.parellisavvy.com • 970-532-3450 |
| Christi Rains | christirains.com • 254-897-7293 |
| Marc Rea | rearanch.com • 509-996-2567 |
| Nita Jo Rush | www.pnhsavvy.com • 612-581-0240 |
| Glenn Stewart CAN | glenn@thehorseranch.com
877-SAVVYUP |
| Gina Torrell | ginatorrell.parellinet.net
814-653-2067 |
| Dan Thompson | danthompson.parellinet.net
406-360-4599 |
| Dr. Grady Carter | www.savvypnh.com • 214-91-HORSE |
| Margaret France | margaretfrence.parellinet.net
801-560-5808 |
| Sandi Parker | sandiparker.parellinet.net • 408-792-0888 |
| Gretchen Thompson | dgt@cyberport.net • 406-862-1331 |
| Gena Warrington | obarw@cswnet.com • 479-243-0062 |
| Sam Beechboard | www.sambeechboardpnh.com
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By Cynthia McFarland

From Computer Keyboard to Cowboy:

**Parelli Instructor
Dave Ellis
Made the Journey**



At first glance, computers and horses seem to have nothing in common. Yet on closer inspection, one thing becomes clear: both horse and machine respond directly to the input they receive from humans, whether it be simple or complicated, positive or negative.

As a 5-Star Premier Parelli Instructor, Dave Ellis is clearly familiar with how horses think, react and communicate. As the owner of a successful computer consulting business, he was also well acquainted with the finer points of technology. At the point where many men in his shoes (make that boots!), would have gladly traded the hustle of running their own company for the pleasures of early retirement, Dave embarked on what has become one of the most fascinating – and rewarding – journeys of his life. And that journey has affected many more lives than just his own.

As a child, home for Dave was Taft, California, a small town about 50 miles from Bakersfield. The oil fields beckoned and Dave went to work in that industry right out of high school. In the 1960s, he was hired by Occidental Petroleum at the time when the company was beginning to grow into an international oil business.

Completely self-taught, Dave never attended college, yet he built a computer department for Occidental Petroleum from the ground up. By the time he left to go out on his own in 1978, Dave had a staff of 14 employees working round-the-clock. Armed with the knowledge and experience he'd gleaned in his years with the oil company, he put together his own computer consulting corporation.

Having owned horses since childhood, Dave considered them a way to unwind while building a career that dished out plenty of stress, but little relaxation. He didn't go searching for Pat Parelli as an answer to his horse handling problems. He wasn't aware of any glaring problems, nor did he feel something was "missing" in the way he worked with his horses. A self-professed "backyarder," Dave was successful in achieving the goals he set with horses. The only thing he ever noticed was that he sometimes found he had to be more forceful than he wanted and, as he puts it, "rude," to get the results he wanted from certain horses.

Dave's horsemanship was hardly the only thing to change after he met Pat and learned more about communicating naturally with horses. Now 62, his entire vision has taken a different turn, and Dave's schedule is busier than ever. Instead of retirement dreams, he is literally traveling the world, taking Pat's program to horsemen and women of all ages.

Dave and his wife Diane live on their LS Ranch (say it



Dave Ellis, 15 years old in 1958, riding in gymkhana events



1982 at a packing school with Mark Berry. A few years later Mark asked Dave to Bishop Mule Days where he met Pat Parelli.

quickly and you'll understand the choice of initials) in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. In addition to being their home, it is an ideal place for friends and students to visit for horsemanship help throughout the year.



Guitar Guru:
If there's a guitar around you can bet Dave and Pat are playing. Here they pick a tune in the Aspen Meadows at the 2004 Parelli Savvy Conference

His entire family has also embraced the Parelli program. Dave's wife Diane, a solid Level 2, holds down the ranch when Dave is on the road, which is frequently. Son Don, who lives in Golden, Colorado, is working on Level 2 and his wife, Carey, is working on her Level 2. Their oldest child has passed her Level 1. Daughter Christena rides and two of her three children are about to pass their Level 1. Youngest son Tyson is attending the Brooks Institute of Photography in Santa Barbara, but according to his father, he's the best rider in the family. Tyson has done nothing "official" with the Parelli levels, but comes to clinics when he can and "has a knack for it," says Dave.

In a recent conversation, Dave explained how the reality he is living today through his involvement with Parelli Natural Horse•Man•Ship is far beyond what he'd ever imagined.

WHAT WAS YOUR BACKGROUND WITH HORSES?

Living on the oil leases where I grew up in California was like living on a ranch, but instead of having cattle, we had oil-pumping units. I had horses since I was about nine years old, as a reward for getting good grades. I learned about horses by training my own, and reading Will James books, *Western Horseman* magazine, and listening to my mother. I didn't have cows to push around, so I just did things for fun with my horses, such as riding in gymkhana events.

Even years later when I was running my business, horses were my diversion. They were a way to not think about the stress and tribulation of running a corporation. I would ride, help friends with their cattle, and pack in the mountains to forget the stress.

HOW WERE YOU FIRST EXPOSED TO PAT AND NATURAL HORSEMANSHIP?

In 1985, a friend named Mark Berry invited me to come to Mule Days in Bishop, California to participate in the packing contests. It's the largest mule show in North America. That's where I saw Pat do a bridleless mule demonstration. I knew some things about mules from packing with Mark in the mountains, but I didn't appreciate Pat's demonstrations at that time because I'd been taking some lessons from Glenn Randall of Black Stallion fame. That was impressive because he was working several horses at once at liberty.

I liked what I saw with Pat, but I just thought he was a typical trainer, all tricks and cues. In fact, I questioned him about that. While I was there he did two private demonstrations and I asked him to explain how he trained his horses and mules to do these things. He said, "It's communication, not training." I tried to be polite, but I thought he was just being secretive and didn't want to share how he did it. I thought he was just a better showman than some I'd seen, but still employing the same age-old techniques.

WHAT MADE YOU REALIZE PAT'S PROGRAM WAS THE REAL DEAL?

Pat dared me to come to a clinic and said if I didn't believe by noon, he'd refund my money. So I went to one of his clinics in Malibu, California, and brought a horse that had taken to running away if I relaxed my reins. Pat dared me to demonstrate in the class, which I did, and the mare ran away. Pat talked me through it on the PA system, and asked if I could ride her as far as she ran. In just a short time, she came to a stop. The point Pat made was if you quit pulling on the reins, the horse wouldn't run away. As soon the mare realized there was nothing to run away from, she just walked.

At that point I knew there was something going on and that the horse was thinking about it. I wanted to know more about it. I had read Dr. Robert Miller's interview with Pat in *Western Horseman* and discounted it because I just thought it was rhetoric and entertainment. But after this first clinic, I felt a whole different thing with the horses and I liked what I felt.

HOW DID YOU GET INVOLVED IN THE PROGRAM AND DECIDE TO BE AN INSTRUCTOR?

At the Malibu clinic, I told Pat's assistant, Vincent, that I could play the guitar pretty decently and would trade out campfire entertainment for some clinics – the old "barter is better" deal! At that point, I was still pouring every dollar back into my computer business. My background was in engineering and mathematics. For me, the horses were just an entertaining hobby, and a



way to change my clothes and forget about work.

In late 1985, I went to another clinic at Pat's ranch in Clements, California. He had a bar-b-que on Saturday night and I played my guitar. Pat went to the house and brought out his guitar, and we played until about 1 a.m. The next morning, he made me an offer. He said, "You teach me about the guitar and I'll teach you about horsemanship."

From that moment on, we never exchanged another dollar. I rode with him anytime I could, we developed a friendship, and he now plays the guitar real well! A few years later I provided him with a data base management system to help run his company, and I became a course Instructor in 1996. I had planned on retiring, and then teaching and developing horses as my second career, but Pat ruined that plan by becoming successful too fast.

Once I became certified, I was teaching for him on weekends. At that time I was the only Instructor for whom livestock was not their true profession, and I found that many of the students in my courses could relate to that. The weekends turned into four-day weekends and the next thing I knew I was spending more time with the horses than my computer business.

WHAT HAS CHANGED IN YOUR LIFE SINCE BECOMING INVOLVED WITH PARELLI NATURAL HORSE•MAN•SHIP?

Prior to getting involved with Pat's program, the picture in my mind was retirement with a house on some acreage, a chance to ride and play with my horses, and a little time to spend with my family.

Now I'm busier than ever and my vision is going to different places to teach Pat's program. I'm still learning myself. I have this burning desire to continue to learn and to share this information with people who want to learn.

Five years ago I ceased marketing my computer business and put all my attention on Pat's program. I have been successful in applying Pat's principles through my business and personal life.

YOU'VE SAID THAT YOU HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE HORSEMANSHIP STUDENTS OUT TO WATCH WILD MUSTANGS ON THE RANGE. WHAT DO THEY LEARN FROM THIS?

Mark Berry, the friend who first got me to Bishop, California, is a life-long packer in the mountains. Mark has a business associate who has a BLM lease that has several herds of wild horses on it. We've put together four-day horsemanship clinics where people can pack in and camp with their horses. We'll do horsemanship lessons in the morning, and then gather up our lunches and look for whatever wild herds we can find. We'll just sit and observe the herd psychology and communica-

tion. We'll get to see many references to Pat's program that are apparent in the wild.

For instance, the lead mare may decide to move the herd and some stragglers may not wish to go. Then the stallion will come along and move the stragglers. This is the same as Pat's use of the carrot stick; it only shows up when needed. When we see the interchange between horses playing dominance games, they're actually playing the Driving Game and the Friendly Game. We ask the students which of the Parelli Seven Games the horses are playing, and which of his principles are being played out.

YOU ARE CURRENTLY THE ONLY PARELLI INSTRUCTOR CERTIFIED TO TEACH COW WORKING CLASSES. HOW DOES THE PARELLI PROGRAM APPLY TO WORKING CATTLE?

I apply all of Pat's principles by playing the Parelli Seven Games with the cow as a moving focus. If the focal point moves, you have to do additional things to keep your focus and get the results you want. We follow the cows, influence them with our horses, and use Pat's principles to put ourselves in a position to cause the right thing to happen. It's very slow and principles-oriented, rather than purpose-oriented. Even though we do end up getting a job done, it's all about applying principles, equine psychology and observing what happens.

The cows give the students immediate feedback. We get all types of horses and it doesn't matter, because we're not doing a "cowboy thing," we're just utilizing the cattle as a measurement of our horsemanship skills at any particular movement.

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD FOR YOU?

These days, I'm really enjoying helping the new Instructors and Instructor candidates. By having my own ranch I can go to the Pat Parelli Center in either Florida or Colorado, and provide some insight to the new Instructors coming along. I like the thought of being a mentor. Every year I say I'll slow down, but it hasn't happened yet. 🐾

(Interested in catching a Parelli clinic with Dave Ellis this year? Check out Dave's clinic calendar which is posted on the Parelli Natural Horse•Man•Ship website at www.parelli.com.)



**Dave
teaching
courses
at the
Pat Parelli
Center in
Pagosa
Springs,
Colorado**

Additional information can be found at Parelli.com or by calling 1-800-642-3335.

Remember: Savvy Club members receive 35% off! (discounts do not apply to the School & University)

2005 FLORIDA

Courses with Parelli Instructors:

Level 1 Apr 3-8 FULL, Oct 16-21, Dec 4-9

Adv. Level 1 Apr 10-15, Oct 23-28, Dec 11-16

Level 1/2 Apr 17-22, Oct 30-Nov 4

Level 2 Apr 3-8 FULL, Apr 24-29 FULL, Nov 6-11

Adv. Level 2 Apr 10-15, Nov 13-18

Level 2/3 Apr 17-22, Nov 20-25

Level 3 Apr 24-29 FULL, Nov 27-Dec 2

2005 COLORADO

Courses with Pat Parelli:

Level 3 Jun 5-14

Level 4 Aug 16-Sep 11

Courses with Linda Parelli:

Riding with Fluidity Jun 5-14

Adv. Fluidity (L3) Jul 17-26 FULL, Jul 31-Aug 9 FULL

Reining Super Camp with Craig Johnson & Pat Parelli: Jul 10-19

Courses with Parelli Instructors:

Level 1 May 22-27 FULL, Jun 19-24, Jul 17-22, Jul 31-Aug 5, Sep 18-23

Adv. Level 1 May 29-Jun 3, Jun 26-Jul 1, Jul 24-29, Aug 21-26

Level 1/2 Jul 3-8 FULL, Aug 28-Sep 8

Level 2 Jun 19-24, Jul 10-15, Jul 31-Aug 5, Aug 14-19, Aug 28-Sep 8

Riding with Fluidity May 22-27 FULL, Sep 18-23 FULL

Adv. Level 2 May 29-Jun 3, Jun 26-Jul 1, Aug 7-12

Level 2/3 Jul 3-8, Aug 14-19

Level 3 Jul 10-15, Aug 21-26

A Horsemanship Experience BIGGER Than Anything You've Ever Dreamed...
Pat Parelli Centers COLORADO & FLORIDA

There is one particular aspect where the mule actually outshines the horse, and that is high-jumping.

Mules have a particular sport all their own called the Coon Hunter's Jump. The sport got its origin from the raccoon hunter moving his saddle and pack mules through the woods. Wooden or stone fences could be taken down, but wire ones could not. The hunter would flag the fence with his coat or a blanket, and jump his string of pack mules over one by one.

In the show ring, mules jump a single rail standard to increasing heights. The last clean jump is the winner. Mules only 50 inches tall at the withers have been known to clear jumps of up to 72 inches. These jumps are not from a galloping approach, like Puissance jumps, but are from a standing start inside a marked area.



What Makes Mules So Danged Special?

by Pat Parelli

Mules are, by definition, a hybrid cross between a horse and a donkey.

There are two ways to produce a mule: You can breed a female (mare) horse to a male donkey, called a jack. This is the most typical breeding to create a hybrid cross that's called a mule. The other way is to breed a female donkey (a jennet) to a horse stallion, and then you get a "hinny" mule. Either way, they're the same kind of animal offspring; they're mules.

Some people claim they can tell the difference between these two types of offspring. They claim that hinnys have shorter ears, but I've certainly seen hinnys that didn't.

UNDERSTANDING MULES

There's one thing about mules:

Never say never and don't always say always. You can usually say usually. But that means maybe. To understand mules, there are a few things you need to comprehend.

Number one, a horse is a "flight-from-fear" animal. A flight-from-fear animal is basically a "plains" animal, which serves them quite well. They can see for miles in any direction, run on straight terrain to get away from predators, and they can duck and dart for survival.

Donkeys, on the other hand, are mountainous animals. For mountainous animals, running when frightened is usually not a smart thing. They could run only 20 feet and fall off a cliff. So what most mountainous prey animals do when startled, is freeze. Then they assess

the problem, then sneak or "stealth" out of the situation. They'll find a clear place to run once they've assessed that situation, too. And then they run like crazy.



But most of the time, survival for mountainous animals is based on being very aware of their surroundings and having a very keen sense of



distance and approach. In other words, is anything approaching, and at what distance is it? Then their idea is, "As long as I can stay 'x' distance away from you (predator), then I can survive." It's usually hard to get undetectably close when you're coming from a distance in mountainous terrain, so the donkey thinks, "I can just go 20 feet this way, or 20 feet higher, and I'll be okay." Those instincts reflect how mountainous prey animals tend to act.

This is one of the things in natural horsemanship we talk about: prey animals and predators. They're not all the same, certainly. For example, prey animals that have horns act differently from prey animals that don't. One of

their primary means of defense is certainly their horns. This even applies to wild cattle or deer or elk. They distance themselves, like we just discussed, or like a billy goat they'll defend themselves and their territory with their horns. So all these animals are slightly different in their prey/predator relationships.

HYBRID VIGOR

We also need to understand what a mule's hybrid vigor means. It essentially means that $1 + 1 = 5$ (or something like that; you get the idea). For example, if you breed a 1200 pound horse to an 800 pound

donkey, you might get a 1000 pound mule. A 1000 pound mule will eat just about the same as the 800 pound donkey, and do quite well. That's hybrid vigor. The 1000 pound mule will also do the work of a 1200 pound (and maybe even bigger) horse. That's also hybrid vigor.

One thing I've noticed over the years, dealing with all the different mules I've trained and ridden in competition, is that what we breed for in other species isn't necessarily true for mules. For example, with breeding horses to horses, you can see a pattern of prepotency in a sire. Prepotency means that the stallion has strong characteristics that are "stamped" in his get; they show up time after time after time, and people might say, "I can always tell a foal that's out of so-and-so stallion."

Prepotency in a sire is oftentimes desirable, but with mules, it seems that the opposite tends to be true more often than not.

So when I say, "Mules are just like horses, only more-so," what comes to mind is that if the mare had a mule foal, whatever characteristics the mare had (skittish, gentle, fast, strong, smart) – that mule foal is probably going to pick up those traits and super-charge them. This is where the hybrid vigor can work for you or against you. The people who have been most successful with mules really tend to have mares with very strong characteristics, and their strong, positive characteristics – things that you would really want in a mule, such as calm, smart, brave, athletic – show up in the mule foal.

Where some people tend to get into trouble is that some mules are super-charged with the wrong characteristics. Mules that are ear-shy, for example, have a "challenge" factor that is so huge that 99% of people never get the mule over it. The

amount of savvy you'd have to have to get the mule over that would be really high.

This is why I've always been attracted to mules and chose them from the beginning. I knew I had to learn quickly and learn well. So I placed myself in various situations with mules. I personally have ridden and/or trained over 300 different mules. I've certainly learned quite a bit over the years. The experiences have taught me that you must treat a mule like you should treat a horse.

MULE + MULE (OR HORSE OR DONKEY) = 0

Horses have an equal number of chromosomes (64). Donkeys have an equal number of chromosomes (62). They're both equids with a fairly equal number of chromosomes. Mules come out with an uneven number of chromosomes (63). Being a hybrid animal means that it cannot reproduce – because its chromosome structure won't allow it. So that's why mules can't breed and reproduce.

MULE RUSSIAN ROULETTE

The next factor to understand about mules is what I call "Russian roulette" – the genetic factor of mules. I have seen a mare have one mule foal that at maturity was 14 hands high. The next mule foal out of the same mare and by the same jack was 16'3 at maturity. I rode this one mule, about 15 hands, named Double Trouble for Troy Henry, and his full sister was 16'3. Same mare, same jack. These are some of the complications about mules.

LOVE MULES, LOVE DONKEYS

In order to know mules, you have to know donkeys. This is probably why many people can't get along with mules – they think mules are more like horses than donkeys. Well, sometimes that's true. I've seen where mules that acted more like horses made good saddle mules,

and mules that acted more like donkeys made good pack mules and farm animals. As I said, a donkey, the mountainous prey animal, when startled will stop and think his way out of a situation. This is why when pack horses get scared as the trail starts to break away, they start scrambling, the situation gets worse, and they wind up falling off the cliff and getting killed. A pack mule (with more donkey-like characteristics) or a pack donkey when startled, will stop, freeze, think, and figure how to get out of the situation.

Understanding mules is a lot about understanding donkey behavior. Oftentimes people who love mules also love donkeys; that's not always the case with horse people.



"PROTECTION" BEHAVIOR

One of the characteristics that donkeys often exhibit is "protection" behavior. A good example of protection behavior is when a shepherd turns a donkey in with a flock of goats or sheep, and the donkeys, in protecting their flock, keep the coyotes and mountain lions away. I've seen donkeys and mules kill calves, sheep, lambs, dogs. This is oftentimes part of their "protective" nature. So it doesn't surprise me that mules are often the most misunderstood animal on the face of the earth.

In the "Readers Digest" version of what I just discussed, we can see that there is a lot to a mule; they're much more complex than most horse people are aware of.

You can train a horse, but you have to come to an understanding with a mule. 🐎

Fact or Fiction? Mule vs. Mountain Lion

In this high-tech, digital era it's hard to tell real photos from fake.

These photos of a mule attacking a mountain lion were posted on the Internet. While the story may not be entirely true, the action taken by the mule is highly probable due to the mule's relationship to donkeys and the donkey's "protective" nature.

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Parelli Awards Presentation Profile

After eight years in the Program, I passed Level 3 on my Missouri Fox Trotter, Velvet.

During the annual holiday party with the close-knit group at my boarding facility, a friend made the announcement that everyone had gotten together to give me a wonderful memento of my glorious journey through Parelli.

I was stunned. It had pictures of me, Velvet, Pat Parelli and my Instructor Jenny Vaught. My best friend Barb pointed out the piece of

Velvet's tail nestled between the Savvy String leather strips.

Now that I'm able to look at the presentation without crying, I think that this is the ultimate depiction of my Parelli Journey. Wherever my journey leads me, my picture will move with me.

Good friends with whom to enjoy the greatest journey ever taken... the Parelli Journey and great horse partners is about as good as it gets in this world!

Thanks to all my great friends, great horses and to Ginny Sue who made this special presentation that depicts my passion!

— Susan Engle,
Level 3 Graduate

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Shorty Comes Full Circle

By Cynthia McFarland



If your horse could speak, he would have no words to define "success." Since horses do not think in the same goal-oriented manner as we do, our constant drive to succeed is not something they understand.

Left to his own devices, your horse will invent his own brand of success. He will play, both on his own and with his companions. He will seek out the tenderest places to graze, find a perfect sunny spot to nap on a cool morning, and hunt that just-right tree limb that allows him to scratch the top of his rump.

Considering that safety, comfort and food are the horse's primary concerns, it is both humbling and amazing that they partner so willingly with us. True, the racehorse loves to run and to a cow horse, working cattle comes naturally. But we should always remember that the goal to constantly improve and succeed in any equestrian sport is a human ambition, and not the horse's goal. Sadly, when the push for success exceeds the horse's training level or ability, he is usually the one that pays the price.

Shorty B Quick was born to cut. Raised on the Polo Ranch in Texas, the bay gelding is by Shorty Lena out of a Docs Lynx mare. As a three-year-old, he had already earned \$16,000 in the cutting pen. A finalist in several futurities, the horse had won the Heartland Futurity by the time John Beug, DVM, a veterinarian who lives and practices in Red Lodge, Montana, bought him as a four-year-old at the National Cutting Horse Association futurity sale in Ft. Worth, Texas in 2001.

In 2002, John and his trainer both showed Shorty, and the horse's earnings increased to about \$24,000. He ended the season

being voted "Cutting Horse of the Year" by the Montana Cutting Horse Association.

After John changed trainers near the end of 2002, he saw a change in Shorty. The once-eager cutting horse had apparently had enough.

"He didn't want to cut any more, he would 'leak' out at the end on his cow, and he'd throw his head up," John remembers. "The trainer said the horse was 'fried' and that the best thing I could do was sell him and get a new horse. But I liked the horse and knew he had the ability. I think he was pushed too hard in some aspects, and never allowed to make a mistake and learn from it. It finally got to the point where he couldn't take it any longer."

Fortunately for Shorty, John knew where to turn.

"I'd known Pat Parelli about 20 years and met him when he was first starting to do clinics," recalls John. "He came to Montana and I attended his clinic. I was so impressed that over the next couple years, we had him back to Red Lodge to hold more clinics.

"I called Pat and told him the story about the horse. Pat was coming to Dillon (Montana) to do a seminar and suggested I bring Shorty over. So I did, and Pat said, 'I think we can help this horse.' He ended up taking him to Colorado for about 18 months and completely started over with him and put the foundation on him that he didn't have."

As Pat explained to John at the time, Shorty was a classic example of his "cake/icing/candles" theory. Without a solid foundation (cake) to build on, a horse can have plenty of icing (sports specific training), but eventually the candles (competition) will cause a crumbling melt-down.

We often say, "I'm so burned out," when we've had a long, stressful workweek. Typically, we're referring more to mental and emotional overload rather than physical. Yet when a performance horse is continually pushed, the resulting stress can manifest itself physically, as well. And unfortunately, the horse can't verbally tell his rider that he's approaching burnout status. Of course, the signs are there, but the rider must pay keen attention to these. (See sidebar on next page.)

Burnout in a competition horse can be mental, emotional, or physical, or it can be a combination of all three. In Shorty's case, it was all of the above.

"With this horse, I think the mental and emotional part actually deteriorated the physical," explains Pat. "His immune system was down, and his coat and feet weren't healthy. He



was depleted. It was like he was on low batteries and all his systems were running on empty."

So how does an obviously talented horse that has already proved his ability in competition get to this point? To start with, burnout doesn't happen overnight, and it is usually caused by a lack of foundation in the horse's training. Raw natural talent can only carry a horse so far and if he doesn't have that critical foundation to carry him along, he can end up "hitting the wall."

Below:
All grins
Jake & Shorty

Opposite:
"The Grand
Finale"
Owner John
Beug & Shorty
cutting cattle
(and Pat)
bridleless
at the 2004
Parelli Savvy
Conference

Pat compares it to a hot rod car. "You can't build the top of the engine unless you build the bottom. You can bring in a fancier carburetor, but if the bottom doesn't have enough foundation, you'll just blow it up. Think of the top end of training as the specific sport, such as cutting, and the bottom as the foundation training."

Shorty was no wanna-be. "On a talent scale of 1 to 10, this horse was 8.9. The only thing above him was a super horse," says Pat. What he was lacking was the total foundation to hold him together.

Shorty spent 18 months with Pat and Linda in Colorado at their ranch in Pagosa Springs. In the beginning, the biggest obstacle the gelding faced was his overall health. Hair and hooves are excellent indicators of health, and Shorty's coat and feet were telling a sad story at that point.

"Most of what we dealt with at first was getting him back on track physically through nutrition and building up his immune system," says Pat. "He just had nothing left. We had to stop training at least half a dozen times because of his feet; he'd throw a shoe and be lame for three or four weeks."

In retrospect, Pat believes the fact that the process took 18 months likely worked in Shorty's favor in an unexpected way. "One of the things we were able to do during that time

was build a lot of rapport," explains Pat. "He had no faith or interest in people when he came to us. Because the process went slowly, this probably

helped him build his faith back. Shorty was hard to love at first because he was just 'vacant.' It was like the lights were on, but nobody was home. Once he started reciprocating, it was a really great feeling."

Shorty went through a process Pat refers to as "re-naturalization."

"The process of re-naturalization is the same process we use to put a good foundation on a horse to find out if he has enough talent to make it in a sport," Pat notes. "About 80% of horses only have enough talent to do a job, while the remaining 20% have enough talent to go on to the next level and excel at a sport. It's like someone who's a good street fighter. Just because they're good at fighting in the street doesn't mean they're going to be a great professional boxer. A really good ranch cow horse doesn't necessarily make a great competitive horse."

"Statistics show that out of the 20% who have the talent to compete, only about 4% will make it through a normal training process and succeed, and this is because of a lack of foundation. But if you lay the right foundation, 19 of those 20 horses will make it. A great foundation won't make a racehorse a winner, but it will make him want to play longer. It won't necessarily make him a success, but it will give him the best opportunity for success."

This is where the Parelli formula of TSTL – talent, skill, try, and luck – comes into play. "A lot of horses have talent, but they don't feel lucky, because they didn't gain the skills they need from foundation training, and then they lose their try and desire," says Pat.

Essentially, Shorty underwent a complete mental/emotional/physical rehabilitation. The first part was getting the horse's health on track so he'd phys-

ically be able to handle the rest of the process.

The second step was working on rapport, respect, impulsion and flexion, which is the foundation created in Levels 1, 2, and 3. Jake Shoemark, a Level 3 graduate who was enrolled in the University program at the Pat Parelli Center in Colorado, rode Shorty through this important phase of re-naturalization.

Enter Pat for the next step, which began 15 months after the horse first arrived at the ranch. Pat began working on the fundamentals of performance, which is Level 4. This included asking for a higher degree of flexion and impulsion, basically "taking everything up another notch – mentally, emotionally and physically."

Pat used a formula of 25% groundwork, 25% arena riding, and 50% outside the arena and trail riding. For a horse that had spent the majority of his time under saddle in a cutting pen, this was a total change.

Pat played with the gelding in the round corral at liberty, asking him to transition from a walk to a canter, then from a canter to a halt. He asked the horse to back up at different speeds, and to circle to the left and right. Maneuvers such as turns on the forehand and disengaging the hindquarters put Shorty in control of his body and responding to a human without being ridden.

In the saddle, Pat began asking for simple and flying lead changes. He also asked Shorty to do a variety of lateral work, such as the sidepass and the counter-arc, which requires the horse to arc his body in the opposite direction of his sideways travel. Walk-to-canter pirouettes, spins, rapidly backing, rollbacks, gallop-to-halt transitions and jumping logs as high as three feet were all part of the routine at this point.





All of these activities were balanced with plenty of time riding outside the arena, moving cattle over open country.

When cattle entered the picture again, it was not in the manner to which Shorty was accustomed. "We started doing some sports-specific things such as following a lot of cattle, roping, and doing things that have to do with cattle, but not necessarily with cutting," notes Pat. "This brought up his interest in cattle again. After all of this, that's when we saw his lights start to come back on. He started getting a positive energy when he was around cattle and the old background in his training started coming out."

The next step was making the transition back to Jake riding Shorty under Pat's tutelage.

During the entire process, John had traveled to Colorado a couple of times to ride his horse. But the grand

finale, as it were, was Parelli Savvy Conference 2004. Pat rode Shorty as a demonstration horse in the conference and then turned the gelding over to his owner in front of a crowd of over two thousand people. "The end result was that John, who had quite a bit of cutting horse experience, had to pretend he'd never ridden a cutting horse before," Pat says.

Riding without a bridle, John cut three cows on Shorty to the thrill of everyone watching, but mostly to John himself. "I hadn't ever done anything like this with him before. I was a little nervous about it, but knowing Pat, I knew he wouldn't ask us to do anything that the horse or I couldn't do. It was a pretty emotional moment for me."

Although Shorty was a natural at cutting, Pat emphasized to John that the goal now was to have him be a great cow horse, to know his job and his purpose in life, which is to get a cow from point A to point B.

Today, John rides his horse *bridleless* as often as possible. "We don't work a lot of cattle, but when we do, it's fun. I'll start competing on him again this summer. He's a lot happier now, and he and I have a bond that's special.

"I see endless numbers of horses in the cutting horse world that go this same way," says John, who is glad he was able to find the right help that could give Shorty the second chance he deserved. "I can't say enough about how grateful and indebted I am to Pat and Linda for all the help they've given the horse. They're very special people to me and always will be."

Not all performance horse burnout stories have such a positive ending. In this case, it's safe to say that cutting horse champ Shorty B Quick has evolved into Shorty B Happy, thanks to a savvy owner and the timely intervention of Pat Parelli. 🐾

Is Your Horse Showing Signs of Burnout?

Is he showing a lack of interest?

Does he try to avoid working?

Is he fretting over something he once enjoyed?

Is he pinning his ears, swishing his tail, grinding his teeth, or tossing his head when asked to work?

Does he often get sore (back, legs, joints)?

How does he look in his coat and weight?

Is he getting more unconfident, spooky?

Is he getting more bracey, resistant?

"In every sport you see people getting bigger bits and spurring harder, and they are on the road to ruin," Pat says. "When the human has to work harder and the horse starts working less, you know you're going south."



Say 'savvy' for the camera! It's all smiles from these Savvy Club members at the Winston-Salem, North Carolina tour in 2003.

NEW! PLEASE READ: TOUR STOP ADMISSION

We are now asking that Savvy Club members reserve their seats at tour stops by requesting a ticket for themselves and anyone on their membership attending. You can also still request an additional five tickets to bring friends for the same price... FREE!

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Savvy Club Photo Contest

In the October 2004 issue of Savvy Times we announced the Savvy Club Photo Contest.

1st PLACE PRIZE:
1 week course at either the Colorado or Florida Pat Parelli Center with a Parelli Instructor;
2nd PLACE PRIZE: \$500 Credit with Parelli;
3rd PLACE PRIZE: Bareback Pad. Entries must be postmarked by June 1, 2005. For rules, eligibility and submission information visit parellisavvyclub.com.

Savvy Club Forum

The Forum is a great resource for Savvy Club members only. While it is not a place to find training information (that's what the Parelli Program, Virtual Instructor and Parelli Professionals are for), it is a place to meet fellow Savvy Club members, share stories and chat about everything Parelli. Recently added is a special Classifieds section. To log on and check out the Forum just log-in to parellisavvyclub.com. Click on the "Savvy Club Forum" link at the top of the page and then select "Register" from the top menu. This will take you through a few easy registration steps. Now you're set to explore existing posts or create your own! Also when you log into the Savvy Club website check out the new member locator option.

BACK ISSUES AVAILABLE

Visit www.parellisavvyclub.com and click on 'Previous Products' or visit the Parelli web shop (and make sure you set up an account if this is your first visit and log-in with the same e-mail address you registered for the Savvy Club) for a listing of back issues available. Hurry! Items over a year old are only available while supplies last. Recent issues include:



Savvy Times Magazine, Issue 6, January 2005

Education: The Pros & Cons of Saddling by Linda Parelli; Sometimes Learning Causes Fear by Dr. Stephanie Burns; The Use and Misuse of Round Corrals by Pat Parelli; A Place of Sacred, Native American Blessings Transform the Pagosa Ranch; Meeting Smart Seven Part 2; Behind the Scenes: Parelli Corporate Offices; Champion Craig Johnson Reins in on Parelli Savvy; A Level 2 Journey with Yvonne Wilcox; Riding the River; Letters; Our Readers Write About: PATIENCE; Meet Pat's Foundation Station Student, Trevor Carter; Q&A with Linda Parelli; Junior Savvy and more!

March 2005 DVD, Issue 8

- **ATTITUDE/KNOWLEDGE** "Smart Seven, Part 6" with Pat Parelli, Scamp and Smart Seven. Smart Seven is now four-and-a-half days old and it's water crossing day! For Seven's first introduction to water crossing, Pat mounts Scamp bareback and rides through the water, letting Seven follow Mom's leadership. "The mare uses leadership to take the foal across water, that's why it's so important we know how to help a foal be confident in our leadership." Pat then leads Seven through the water for the first time, eventually letting Scamp loose and leading Seven through the water with Scamp following at

liberty. Pat also talks about his plan for after the first 168 hours of a foal's life, and takes an opportunity to *naturally* introduce Seven to fly spray.

- **FEAR MAKEOVER** "Savvy Conference 2004: Fear Makeover, Day Three" with Linda Parelli and Dr. Stephanie Burns. Continued from Part 2 in the February 2005 DVD. Stephanie talks about our responsibilities as learners and the dignity of the student, not just the horse, when it comes to teaching and learning. "It's important to know how to stand up for yourself and defend yourself as a student... Only you can know when you're ready... Only you can say when it's right for you." Stephanie also discusses success strategies for planning and achieving your goals, because "time will pass whether you do anything or not..."
- **TOOLS/TECHNIQUES** "Savvy Conference 2004: Dressage and Reining" with Reining Champion, Craig Johnson, and Dressage Instructor and Associate Parelli Professional, Karen Rohlf. It's the big switch! Craig and Karen switch hats and horses (*Adalusian* x TB mare and QH stallion) in this delightful dressage/reining demonstration. You'll get to see Karen's first slide stop and Craig's first Piaffe!
- **INSPIRATION** "Demonstration at Germany Savvy Day" with Silke Vallentin. A very inspirational demonstration to music with Silke Vallentin and her Andalusian mare and 7-month-old foal creatively playing *On Line* with obstacles!



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Porcupine Game#2 Simulations

*These simulations will provide you with amazing feedback, but do not play them with your **real** horse because this is only for your learning right now. You're playing and experimenting! Play these simulations with a friend or parent. One of you will be the human, and the other will be the "human-horse." Adults should practice this, too!*

Required Tools: Carrot Stick

Practice "The Friendly Rub"

It's important to know how to give your horse a friendly rub that feels good! Try this on a friend or parent. How did it feel? Did it tickle? Was it scratchy?

Practice the rub until your partner thinks it's "just right." Then switch and let them have a turn.

Friendly Games with the Carrot Stick Come First!

Stand facing your partner and leave at least one Carrot Stick's length between you. Only one of you needs to have a stick.

Is your partner afraid of the stick? How would you find this out? Would you walk right up to your partner with your Carrot Stick raised and ready to play the Porcupine Game? Or would you play "approach and retreat" first? (In the January 2005 issue of *Savvy Times* we played with "approach and retreat." You can also find detailed information on approach and retreat in the New Level 1 program.)

You can only start playing the Porcupine Game when your partner (the human-horse) knows that the stick is friendly and just another part of you (the Carrot Stick makes your arm longer!).

Practice "The Friendly Rub" with the Carrot Stick

SAFETY FIRST: Be careful of your partner's face. You shouldn't bring the Carrot Stick above your partner's shoulders.

It's important to know how to give your horse a friendly rub (that feels good!) with the Carrot Stick before and after playing the Porcupine Game#2. The rub *before* the Porcupine Game is to show your horse that you're friendly and polite. The rub *after* is to help rub away the feeling of the steady pressure from the Porcupine Game#2.

Rub your partner on their arm with the Carrot Stick. Ask them how it feels. Does it feel too tickly and

light? Medium and good? Too hard? Too fast? Too slow? Practice this until your partner says it feels "just right!" Then give the stick to your partner and let him or her try it on you.

Discovering How the "Four Phases" Feel

Now that you've learned the "friendly rub," you can learn what Pat Parelli's "Four Phases of Friendly Firmness" feel like!

Make sure both you and your human-horse are wearing short sleeves, or roll up your sleeves, because you want to really be able to feel the phases. The Four Phases of the Porcupine Game#2 are to press the hair, skin, muscle, then bone. Don't try to move your partner yet. Right now you're just discovering what each phase feels like.



Try Phase 1 – Press the hair.

Lift the stick and then give a friendly rub to your partner's arm. Now, very slowly, start to press the hair on their arm.

Have your partner tell you when

they first feel you pressing their hair. Is it when you thought you were? Or was it before you thought you were? Or did you think you were pressing the hair but were actually pressing their skin? Give your partner's arm a friendly rub, then switch roles and practice again.



Now try Phase 2 – Press the skin.

Lift the stick and then give a friendly rub to your partner's arm. Now, very slowly, start to press their skin. Have your partner tell you when they first feel

you pressing their skin. Is it when you thought you were? Or was it before you thought you were? Or did you think you were pressing the skin but were actually pressing their muscles? Give your partner's arm a friendly rub, then



switch roles and practice again.

Try Phase 3 – Press the muscle.

Lift the stick and then give a friendly rub to your partner's arm. Now, very slowly, start to press their muscle. Have your



partner tell you when they first feel you pressing their muscle. Is it when you thought you were? Or was it before you thought you were? Or did you think you were pressing the muscle but were actually pressing their bone? Give your partner's arm a friendly rub, and then switch roles and practice again.



Try Phase 4 – Press the bone.

Lift the stick and then give a friendly rub to your partner's arm. Now, very slowly, start to press their bone. Have your partner tell you when they first feel you pressing their bone. Is it when you thought you were? Or was it before you thought you were? Or did you think you were pressing the bone but were actually pressing their muscle? Give your partner's arm a friendly rub, and then switch roles and practice again. (Note: This is not meant to hurt your partner! If they say "ouch," stop and give a friendly rub to the spot you were pressing!)

Smooth Transitions Through the Phases

See if you can go through all four phases very smoothly. This time you're going to give a friendly rub first, then press the hair for three seconds, press the skin for three seconds, press the muscle for three seconds, and press the bone for three seconds, then give a friendly rub again at the end. (Practice how long three seconds takes by watching a wristwatch and counting out loud.)

Your partner needs to tell you what they are feeling throughout this task to help you know that you're using the right Phase, and if your transitions feel smooth and not jerky. Switch roles and practice again.

Practicing When to Quit!

Now that you have a better understanding of what the phases feel like, you're going to start asking your partner to move away from the steady pressure of each phase of the Porcupine Game.

Quitting at the right time is one of the most important things you can learn! You should quit the pressure from the stick when your partner starts to move away from the pressure.

Note: Just for this exercise, your partner should move their arm when they feel the pressure. This is not a pushing competition! This is only to practice how quickly and politely you can quit pressing, and then give a friendly rub.

Try Phase 1 – Press the hair. Lift the stick and then give a friendly rub

to your partner's arm. Now, very slowly, start to press their hair. When your partner starts to move their arm away from the pressure, stop pressing! Then give a friendly rub on the spot you were pressing. Ask your partner how it felt. Did it feel nice when you stopped pressing and started to rub? Or was it too slow, or too jerky between the press and the rub? Switch roles and practice again.

Now try Phase 2 – Press the skin. Lift the stick and then give a friendly rub to your partner's arm. Now, very slowly, start to press their hair, then their skin. When your partner starts to move their arm away from the pressure, stop pressing! Then give a friendly rub on the spot you were pressing. Ask your partner how it felt. Did it feel nice when you stopped pressing and started to rub? Was it too jerky between the phases? Switch roles and practice again.

Try Phase 3 – Press the muscle. Lift the stick and then give a friendly rub to your partner's arm. Now, very slowly, start to press their hair, then the skin, then muscle. When your partner starts to move their arm away from the pressure, stop pressing! Then give a friendly rub on the spot you were pressing. Ask your partner how it felt. Did it feel nice when you stopped pressing and started to rub? Was it too jerky between the phases? Switch roles and practice again.

Try Phase 4 – Press the bone. Lift the stick and then give a friendly rub to your partner's arm. Now, very slowly, start to press their hair, then their skin, then their muscle, then their bone. When your partner starts to move their arm away from the pressure, stop pressing! Then give a friendly rub on the spot you were pressing. Ask your partner how it felt. Did it feel nice when you stopped pressing and started to rub? Was it too jerky between the phases? Switch roles and practice again. (Note: This is not meant to hurt your partner! If they say "ouch," stop and give a friendly rub on the spot you were pressing!)

Thanks Sophie & Andrew for helping us illustrate Porcupine Game#2 Simulations. In the next issue, we'll put the Porcupine Game#2 to a purpose!

Body Language
Don't forget what your body's saying.

1. When you quit the rub or Porcupine Game or even before you start, you should stand relaxed and friendly.

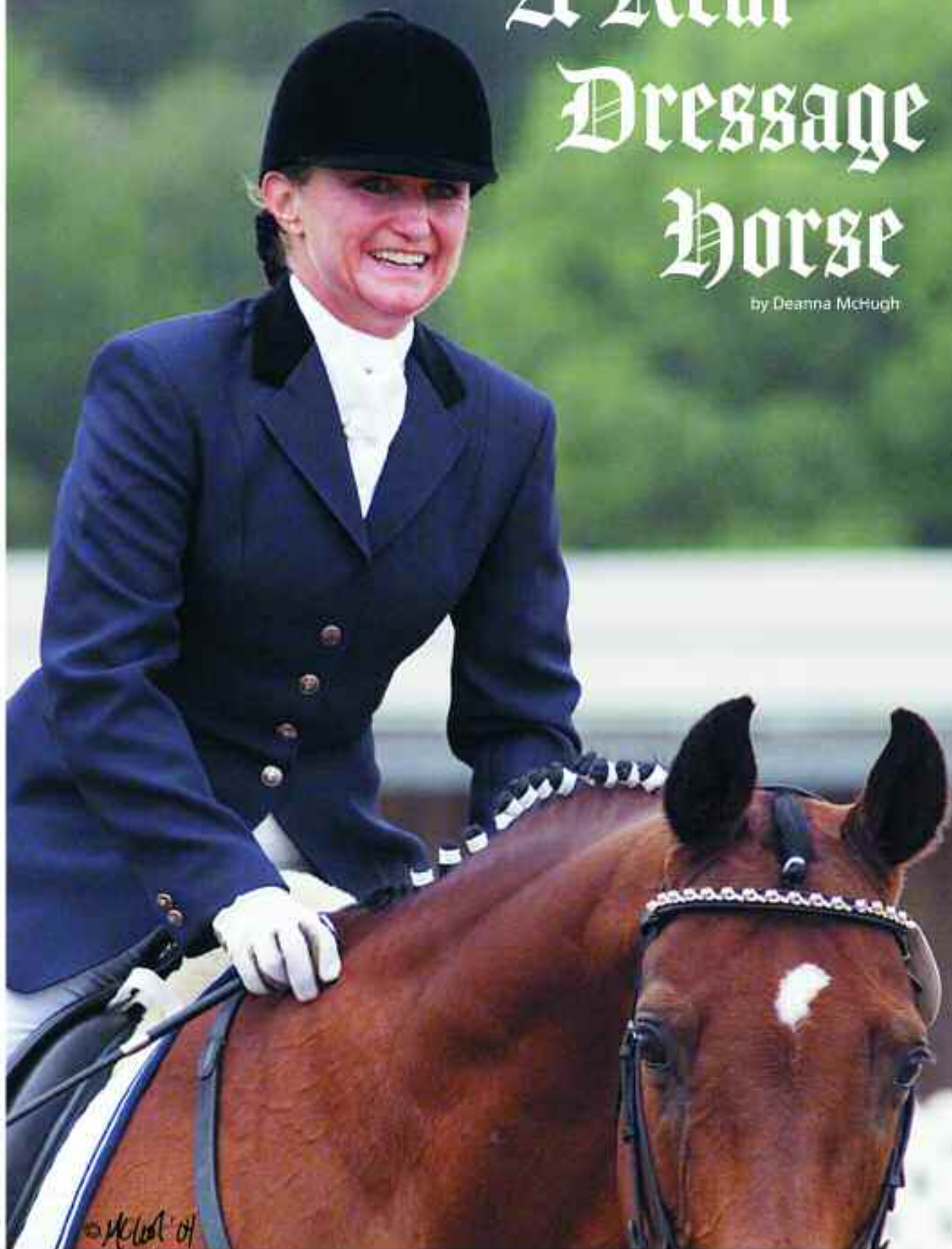
2. When you're giving your horse "The Friendly Rub" you should smile and look friendly.

3. If you're trying to move your horse with the Porcupine Game, put on your Schwiigermutter look.



A Real Dressage Horse

by Deanna McHugh



Nearly six years ago I purchased a horse I had no business buying. I saw the video, met the horse, and wrote the check. My purported rationale was that this 8-year-old, recently-gelded Oldenburg would be able to teach me and my teenage daughter a thing or two about dressage, since he was trained to third level (or so we were told). The truth was that I had fallen in love with him the minute I saw him on tape. The strength of this inexplicable infatuation has dragged me, my long-suffering family, and my incredibly patient trainer on a rollercoaster journey through a bizarre assortment of training methods, horse psychology, veterinary medicine, nutrition, healers, chiropractors, emergency rooms, and a cast of characters that resembles the opium-inspired adventures of Alice in Wonderland.

There is no need to bore anyone with a detailed account of the neuroses which afflict this animal or the often (literally) painful ways in which they have been revealed to me over time. But his spookiness is the stuff of legend, his agility is that of an enormous cat, and when I fractured my spine after a particularly impressive spin-and-bolt, I reached the conclusion that either I had to sell the horse or learn to ride well enough to stay on his back. If I was going to keep him, I would also need to try to overcome whatever it was in him that made him so volatile and dangerous. So, despite the new sobriquets he had earned ("Killer" and "Slammer" were two of them), and all of the people who said to get rid of him, I kept my boy and I called him Parker.

Although I wouldn't recommend six months of wearing a back brace as a means of getting to know your horse, it worked for us. I spent part of every day just walking him anywhere and everywhere. My trainer labeled these "The Walks of Fear," since there was nothing that didn't spook this horse, including his own flatulence. Walking him out in the hills on trails and through lemon orchards and eventually on the beach, I learned a great deal (including how to move my feet faster than any tap dancer; that's why I still have toes). Here's a small but crucial point: I never used a stud chain. Having been a stud horse for so long, Parker knew all about stud chains and how much they could hurt. But it seemed to me that he hadn't learned much else. How could he, with the whole world contracted to just the ring of pain around his sensitive nose? What I used instead – and I will always be grateful to my dad for this – was a Parelli halter and a Parelli 12-foot Line.

The tools really helped. So did the time that I took. Eventually I would come to know that these are two of the keys of Pat Parelli's teachings. My maniacal horse gradually developed really good ground manners, so we

began to use Parelli halters on all of our horses and noticed great improvement. I became somewhat interested in the whole Parelli Program at that time, but not seriously enough to expend much energy on it. Parker and I were in training five days a week, plus clinics and shows. He continued to spook, shy, and tense while under saddle, so our scores ranged from abysmal to very bad, with an occasional 60-plus just to torment me into thinking we might someday make some progress. Some of the clinics were okay, but one clinician refused to teach us any more because I was "an up-and-downer" and Parker was a nut case.

While I struggled to acquire the dressage skills I needed to ride through the worst of our episodes (like our rodeo performance at Del Mar), I tracked my father's progress with his Arabians using the Parelli Program. My father has been working his way through the Parelli Levels for the past few years, in between running various businesses and re-modeling his house. It amazed me to watch this man (who did not grow up with horses and is 66 years old) "ask" his horses to side-pass to him at the fence so he could mount them (no halter, lead, bridle or saddle), then canter around the arena together in total trust and harmony.

I wanted so badly to be able to do these "tricks" with my horse, but it seemed to be an impossible and unobtainable goal. Still, I started to incorporate some of the Parelli teachings into my daily routines and began to see a few interesting changes. As I began to learn about the body language that Parelli attributes to horses (much of it very different from what you might think!), I noticed that my horse was paying closer attention to me. If I wanted him to move over, I could just look, or at most, point, to what I wanted moved and where. I could free-lunge Parker at a canter and with a slight motion of my body have him stop cold and face me. With an even smaller movement I could ask him to canter off in the opposite direction. At the point where I became convinced that these weren't "tricks" but the result of true communication and trust, I became interested enough to attend a Parelli Clinic on Advancing Horsemanship taught by the man who had been teaching my father.

Dave Ellis has been with the Parelli organization for more than two decades and he would be a gifted and effective instructor in any subject he chose to teach, simply because he is intelligent, observant, and sensitive. However, that was not my first impression of the clinic. At the risk of offending any of the truly inspirational and talented people I watched and grew to admire that weekend, I must say that my initial response was some-

**Deanna's dad,
Brian, and his
horse, Khammy**



what dismissive. Perhaps my ignorance and snobbishness grew out of six years of watching big, expensive Warmbloods at four-star shows with classically turned-out and accomplished dressage riders. At the Parelli clinic, little horses dominated the field, the people just looked like regular folk, and the air seemed a bit redolent of cowboy worship. But the things that these people and horses accomplished over the course of three days made my head spin. I recognized that the goals of Parelli dovetail quite perfectly with those of dressage: Partnership, Harmony, and Refinement. I told my father that I would complete the Level 1 home study program by the beginning of January, so that I would be eligible to attend an Advancing Horsemanship clinic with him in the New Year.

There's nothing like being taken at your word. My father's Christmas gift to me was enrollment in a Dave Ellis Clinic in January. Fortunately, Dad gave me enough advance notice so that I could spend the month of December in a complete panic over whether Parker and I could actually learn enough of the course material to not humiliate ourselves completely. You can imagine how thrilled my dressage trainer was, after years of painstaking schooling, to have me riding Parker around with no bit in his mouth, and either his head or his croup straight up in the air, depending on which gait we were mangling. On a good note, the usual holiday frenzy never even touched my consciousness. That holiday season I lived, ate, dreamed and breathed Parelli. It's surprising that I didn't sprout a huge Parelli-style

moustache from the number of hours I spent absorbing Parelli-isms from video tapes. It is also something of a surprise that I'm still married, as I am not sure that I ever did the Christmas shopping or cooked the turkey.

Have I mentioned that trailering my horse has been something of an issue? It probably wouldn't surprise you to know that it has taken me as long as 4-1/2 hours to get him in the trailer, and that was with a well-loved companion horse. Rather than risk missing the whole clinic by attempting to load Parker by himself, I arranged to take my elderly Arabian mare with us to keep Parker company on the drive out to the desert. That worked out perfectly: it only took two hours to load him into the trailer. The three of us were finally on our way, but to what? My palms were sweating!

When we got to the facility that was hosting the clinic, my daughter and my father were both there to help us get settled. I wouldn't be surprised if some of the other 20 attendees thought that I was a bit high maintenance, with my European trailer and my entourage of helpers, but our host and his wife were warm and welcoming. There were probably some chuckles over my precious horses in their fluffy polo bandages and neoprene tail wraps (my Arabian's "ensemble" is purple, but what else would you buy for a grey mare named Amethyst?). Parker came out of the trailer with his head straight up in the air, bugling like the stallion that he once was. I was hoping we'd blend in with the crowd, but he has a very loud voice. His snorting, prancing promenade to his pen demonstrated an incredible ability to passage and piaffe with a completely hollow back. It did not, however, bode well for the next day's "cowboy clinic," as I had dubbed it.

I felt rather self-conscious when I double-blanketed that night (especially sweet Amethyst in her girly purple), but the desert is a lot colder than where we live and my spoiled babies were going to sleep out on the ground. In fact, the weather predictions for the next day were freezing temperatures and rain. I prepared myself mentally for a weekend of abject misery on every level. I just hoped that the physical discomfort might take my mind off of whatever humiliations were in store for us. My performance anxiety was made worse by the fact that my dad was not going to be taking part in the clinic with me. Instead, he was going to be WATCHING. As an athlete in training, I made sure to drink a great deal of wine that night (you never know when a wicked hangover might prove to be a useful excuse).

Well, surprise, surprise! Parker and I did not embarrass ourselves. He did not spook at the attacking Rottweiler or the galloping mule or the gale force winds.

I did not have reason to panic, cry, or fall off. He concentrated, I concentrated. We learned a great deal, thanks to Dave Ellis and his helpful assistants. It gets even better: Parker figured out how to carry himself. That sounds pretty small, I suppose, to advanced riders with advanced horses. But it felt amazing to me when, without bit or bridle, Parker started to use his back and actually assumed a correct frame. It was noticeable enough that the instructor commented and people came up to me afterward to say how beautiful Parker looked at that moment. My dad even started to clap. Of course, my daughter stopped him immediately ("Grandpa! How embarrassing!"). But still – we were triumphant!

The story could just end there, except that real life tends to continue right past its climactic moments and occasionally into some pretty swampy lows. Parker and I had a dressage show at the Los Angeles Equestrian Center the weekend following the Parelli clinic. Everything was going spectacularly well on the day before the show. For the first time, Parker wasn't even the slightest bit tense or spooky. I schooled him in each arena and after about an hour of perfect calm and obedience, I jumped off and hugged him. I called out to my daughter, who was riding her young horse in the next arena, that I was happier than I'd ever been and that I was putting my wonder-horse to bed.

As I led Parker from the warm-up area, one of The Top Trainers – a woman I respect and admire – approached me looking none too pleased. "What is this I hear about you riding your horse around with no bridle and his head straight up in the air?" Caught off guard by the fact that she would either know or care what I'd been doing, I mumbled something to the effect that, yes, I had been riding bridleless at a clinic the previous weekend and that it seemed to have improved my horse immensely. I hadn't even finished speaking when The Trainer treated me to a diatribe on the RIGHT way to develop a dressage horse (side reins, draw reins, correct frame from the time they're three, total consistency, and never, ever confuse them with anything else, etc.) versus the

WRONG way, which was basically everything that had happened to my horse before I got him and everything I had done since. But especially that COWBOY stuff because, in this particular trainer's view, "all cowboys want is to break horses and that means break their spirits." Having stated her case, The Trainer then produced her idea of evidence – a number of cruel methods and tools that have nothing whatsoever to do with Parelli. Speechless and as deflated as an old balloon, I took Parker back to his stall, where I wept with frustration, confusion, and embarrassment.

By the next morning I recognized that I had every reason to be embarrassed. I should have had the courage of my convictions. What kind of person am I if I cannot state the truth as I know it? How can I let someone, no matter how famous or important, trample all over the things I know to be right? Although I have not yet convinced that particular trainer of the benefits of Parelli, she was at least able to witness the obvious improvements in my horse over the two days of the horse show. Since she had previously described Parker as having "a screw loose," it was a step in the right direction that this woman noticed the complete change in his demeanor. To paraphrase The Trainer: Now that I have a "real horse," it's time to turn him into a "real dressage horse."

But I think about Parker a little differently since my "cowboy clinic." It seems to me, now that I finally have a real partner, it's time to work on our Harmony and Refinement. If that means Parker turns out to be a "real dressage horse," so be it. Just as long as he thinks of me as a real partner, too. 🐾

(Editor's Note: Deanna is enrolled for Linda Parelli's Fluidity Course in June. I suspect we'll be hearing more about Deanna and Parker.)



**Parker and
Deanna playing**



Those owners had raised buffalo, up to 50 at a time; the buffalo were herded into a small 3-acre field and shot for fun and profit.

We learned that the ranch was surrounded by a drug ring. We could not walk on the roads or in the woods for fear of stumbling into pot farms or being hit by speeding drug dealers. We felt like giving up. How could we honestly sell such a cursed place to some unsuspecting family like ourselves?

One day a neighbor called to ask me to attend a horse auction with her. I had never gone to a horse auction but reluctantly agreed.

I was there with one intention, to acquire up to four horses for my family to trail ride. I was looking for gentle, trained, old horses. There were approximately 300 horses for sale, but only 50 or so buyers in the stands. My friend pointed out the meat buyers. The best horses were selling for less than \$400 each. My brain went, "Except for the 10 or so that go to people like myself, the rest are going to slaughter." I bought 10 horses that day, for an average of \$200 a horse. My friend, who already has 25 horses and less money, bought four for an average of \$150 each. The whole experience was horrific.

Something changed after I bought the horses; the land seemed less cursed. We were surrounded by gentle horse faces, gentle horse spirits. They watched for us. The horses looked at the drug dealers when they drove by. I felt I had an army on my side now. We were saving animals from slaughter and that changed the ranch. We were going to stand up to the drug dealers and take the land back. Maybe the Indian, horse and buffalo spirits would forgive us.

After giving the horses a week to settle in and know that we were kind people, we tried to check them out in the riding ring. To my surprise, the horses were all unrideable, some

unsaddleable. What now? I put them back in the field to let them heal from their trauma and went to educate myself. I bought books and tapes from all of the horse gurus that I could find. When I saw a Pat Parelli show on RFD-TV I was drawn to the "natural" approach. I joined the Savvy Club and started studying the materials. Slowly, as I learn more, my unrideable horses are becoming easier and easier to get along with. As I educate myself suddenly my horses are polite and well mannered in the field and under saddle.

This morning I got up and the Savvy Times was sitting out where my husband had left. We both read all of the articles and related so much. Then we read about the Native American Blessings. How many times had we wished to have a shaman tell us what to do to lift the curses?

Before we moved here we did not sit around thinking about such things. We have never studied Indian religions or dwelled much on the slaughter of Indians, horses and buffalo. These subjects have come to us with this place.

Our goals are to train ourselves to work with the horses we have. To clean the woods and roads up enough to trail ride. To bring guests to our ranch. To bless the land with good instead of evil. To be free of pain in order to reach these goals. We love our rescued horses and we don't really know why. It does not make sense. We don't have the time or strength to be horse people, but we are.

We would appreciate any advice and encouragement your organization would lend. Thank you for your program and your magazine. If you know of a Native American medicine man in Eastern Washington who could visit us, we would appreciate the help.

— Vondell Savage

TRAILERING SUCCESS (FINALLY!)

I started my journey with the trailer as soon as I bought my horse, although I never thought to teach him to accept it. Once I started my Level 1 I was sold on Parelli. But, I was lost (about trailer loading) until I bought Pat's trailer loading DVD. That helped me so much! Using the info from that DVD I started making progress. Slowly, but

we did get places – one zone at a time.

We progressed, then regressed so dramatically I thought it was useless – I'd never be able to go anywhere with my horse! In the months that we struggled with the trailer, I bought the Level 2 kit. In three months we could do everything – except the trailer. Another three months and my horse was able to load in enough to pass Level 1, but nothing more. Six more months and we could pass Level 2, but he couldn't handle the trailer moving. I stupidly thought he was ready and started to drive with him in the trailer but he freaked out, losing all confidence. Our relationship faded and I was in distress! It was now 18 months of this!

Then I e-mailed Parelli Instructor Nita Jo Rush and got her advice saying I should feed and water him in the trailer. This boosted my horse's confidence. But it still took two months before I started thinking about moving the trailer.

Last Monday I decided he was ready. So, I warmed him up, checked out his attitude for the day, allowed him to express his playfulness and then asked him to go in. He was happy to go in. Then, when we were ready, I started driving him in the pasture! I drove him for 20 minutes the first day, 40 the next, and his confidence was wonderfully steady! He was nervous but listened to me. Backing out, he was able to match my calmness and didn't get right-brained like he used to.

I'm so proud of that Arab! He has come so far, not only in studying Level 3 with me, but in every aspect. Now the biggest hurdle is behind us and from here we're going up!

Thank you ever so much for helping me, and thank you, Nita Jo, for your encouragement and advice.

— Meg Ellis and Flash



I have become a FAN of Parelli since we attended the "Success with Horses" tour in Calgary, Canada in 2003.

Q&A with Linda Parelli

My daughter Brittany and I have a few questions about what we are feeding our horses, because Brittany's horses have been having all kinds of skin problems.

The horses are as diverse as my children, two girls 14 and 16. Dandy is a 3-year-young Quarter Horse gelding approximately 1000 lbs. Otto is a draft cross around 25 years old, approximately 1500 lbs.

Dandy has been having skin problems since we got him. Dry patches, flaky stuff in his mane and tail areas, eruptions that ooze serum, scratches on all feet, patches of hair loss around the eyes and ears, that sort of stuff. We have given him Dri Kill dustings twice and a Betadine bath.

Otto's ailments have to do more with his feet and front joints. He creaks when he moves and seems to have sore feet. He has a whitish powdery stuff on his hair when I brush him. His mane seems to have the ends dried out and I didn't notice that when I first picked him up.

My question is: Is the feed we are giving these boys adequate and doing any good for the problems I have described? There seems to be about as many opinions as breaths people take on nutrition for horses. I truly trust your advice as I have seen the horses in your DVD's you send to us monthly and I WANT our boys to have great looking bodies too! We feed alfalfa/brome/timothy mix hay (free feed), Farrier's Formula, 16% sweet feed, Otto gets Senior Flex, and molasses as needed to mix all together.

I don't know where to go to get information as each vet we have talked to has a different opinion on how well our horses are.

I was reading your information on Parelli Essentials, and was wondering if I stopped all this other stuff, and just gave them the Parelli Essentials would that be a good thing?



Feeding horses simply and effectively to keep them healthy is something I've been pursuing for as long as I've owned horses. Since beginning Essentials, I have never seen the kind of improvement visible in our horses as I have now, and it's so simple. The whole key is digestion. If a horse can't digest something, no matter how nutritious or good it is supposed to be, it can be a problem. It's a problem because you waste money, get no effect, and the horse might react to it.

Digestive allergies are usually a form of indigestion to varying and sometimes serious degrees. It all reflects back on the horse's ability to digest well. Things that compromise a horse's digestion are stress, age, ill health, dehydration, etc. There's more information on this in the brochure on Essentials and at parelli.com.

In feeding horses I try to stick to whole grains (oats, sunflower seeds), wheat bran and hay or chopped hay. I don't like to give lots of supplements or pre-prepared feeds with added nutrients because sometimes their complexity makes it more difficult for the horse to digest.

I'm not going to tell you to stop everything you're doing, but after reading about Essentials, looking at the amazing results people are reporting with their Savvy Club Forum comments, and knowing that this is how we care for our horses, you'll know what to do for your horses.

When Your Horse Walks Off While You're Trying To Mount...



by Pat Parelli

We've all seen the desperate rider who's halfway up into the saddle when the horse jogs off. The rider starts yelling and grasping for horn, saddle string, cantle, breast collar, pommel, mane – anything that he or she can reach. It may sound (and look) funny, but that can be a very dangerous situation.

Getting your horse to stand while you mount is not difficult. A horse that's being mounted starts into motion when he gets off balance. So most of this "he won't stand" behavior is because people ask the horse to bear their weight during mounting (lopsided, mostly) when the horse is unbalanced. The horse shifts around to gain his balance,

and then he just keeps moving.

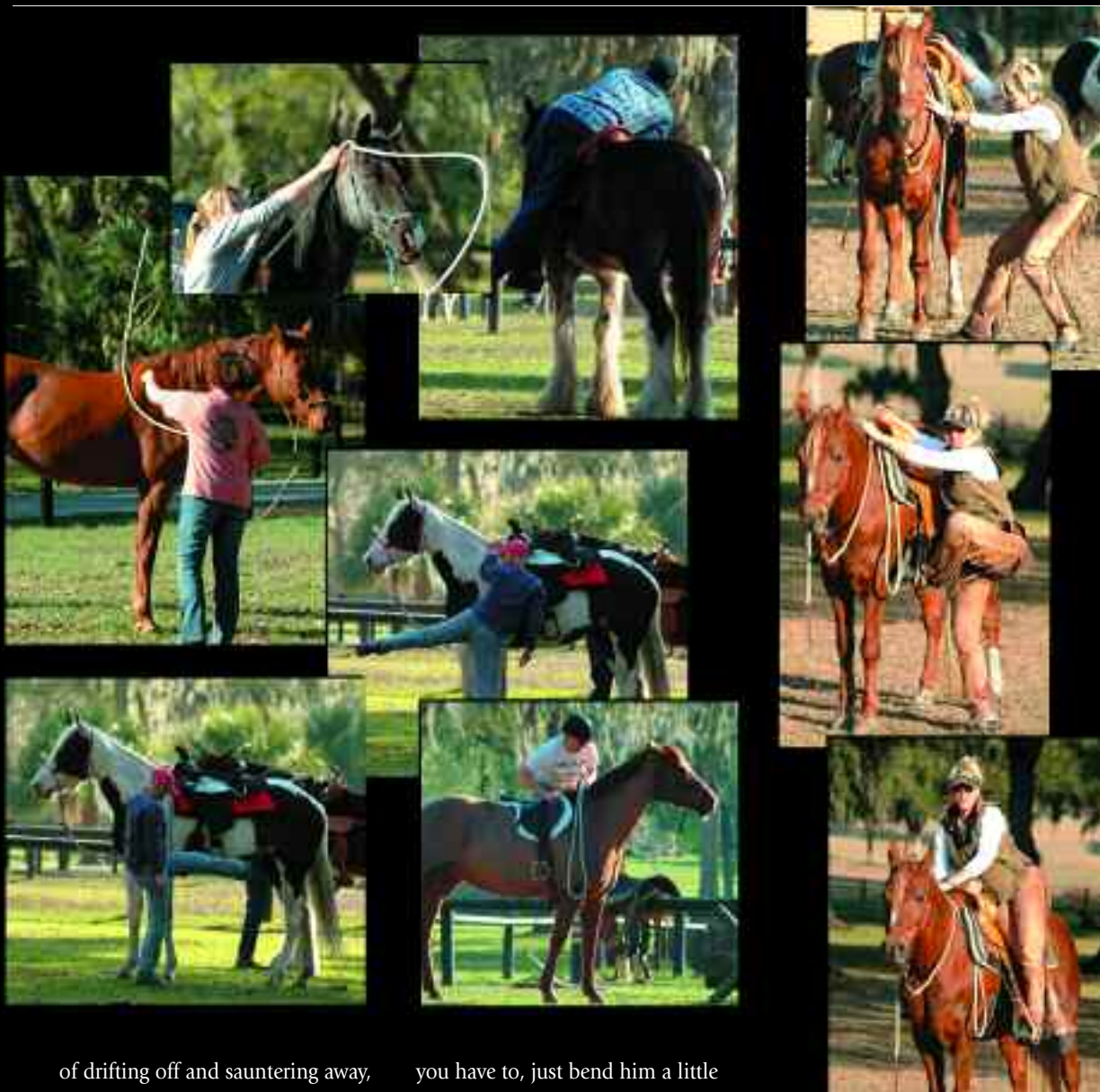
This can be prevented by doing a few things.

1. Play with your horse until he gets left-brained and is listening to you, and he wants to stand still. This means all Seven Games, including a lot of Friendly Game that involves repetition: tossing the lead rope over his back, flopping the saddle pad off and on, lifting your foot toward the stirrup and back down (over and over until it ceases to bother your horse). Play the Seven Games before you saddle up; you'll find out what side of the corral he woke up on.

2. Position your horse so his feet are braced in readiness for you to get on. Cause the horse to spread his

legs to best balance himself. This can be easily done by pushing and pulling on the saddle horn; rock the horn or pommel from side to side and actually try to unbalance your horse. You'll feel the horse spread his front legs and square up behind. He'll get into a position where he kinda says, "Hey, you can't knock me off balance." Make a little game of it until he just thinks that the way to prevent you from rocking him is to spread his legs and stand solid.

If you get up on the horse and he starts to walk off before you want him to, and if you're in a good, safe position, I want you to think of one of two things. You need to determine quickly if the horse is just sort



of drifting off and sauntering away, or is he getting right-brained, tight, fast and furious.

If the horse is getting fast and furious, get off and start again. Evidently you didn't do enough preparation on the ground (Seven Games, assessing the horse with the "Parelli pre-flight checklist").

If the horse is just drifting a little bit, there's a saying, "Lift to stop the drift." The lift I'm talking about is the rein in your left hand (if you're mounting from the left side). Whatever side you're mounting from, lift straight up on that rein – don't pull back, don't pull sideways, just lift the rein straight up. Just try to get in his way a little bit, and if

you have to, just bend him a little and then stand there until he squares up. Instead of getting on, step down. Then put your foot in the stirrup and step up again.

This is one of the tasks in our Level 1 program we recommend: Mount 3 times on each side. This gives you the skills and physical and mental fitness to teach the horse to stand still. Both of you should practice this little drill together: Down and up, down and up, down and up, stand half-way up, when he stands still reach over and rub the horse on the far shoulder to ask "permission" to get on. If he stands still, go ahead and get on (settle gently into the saddle and find your

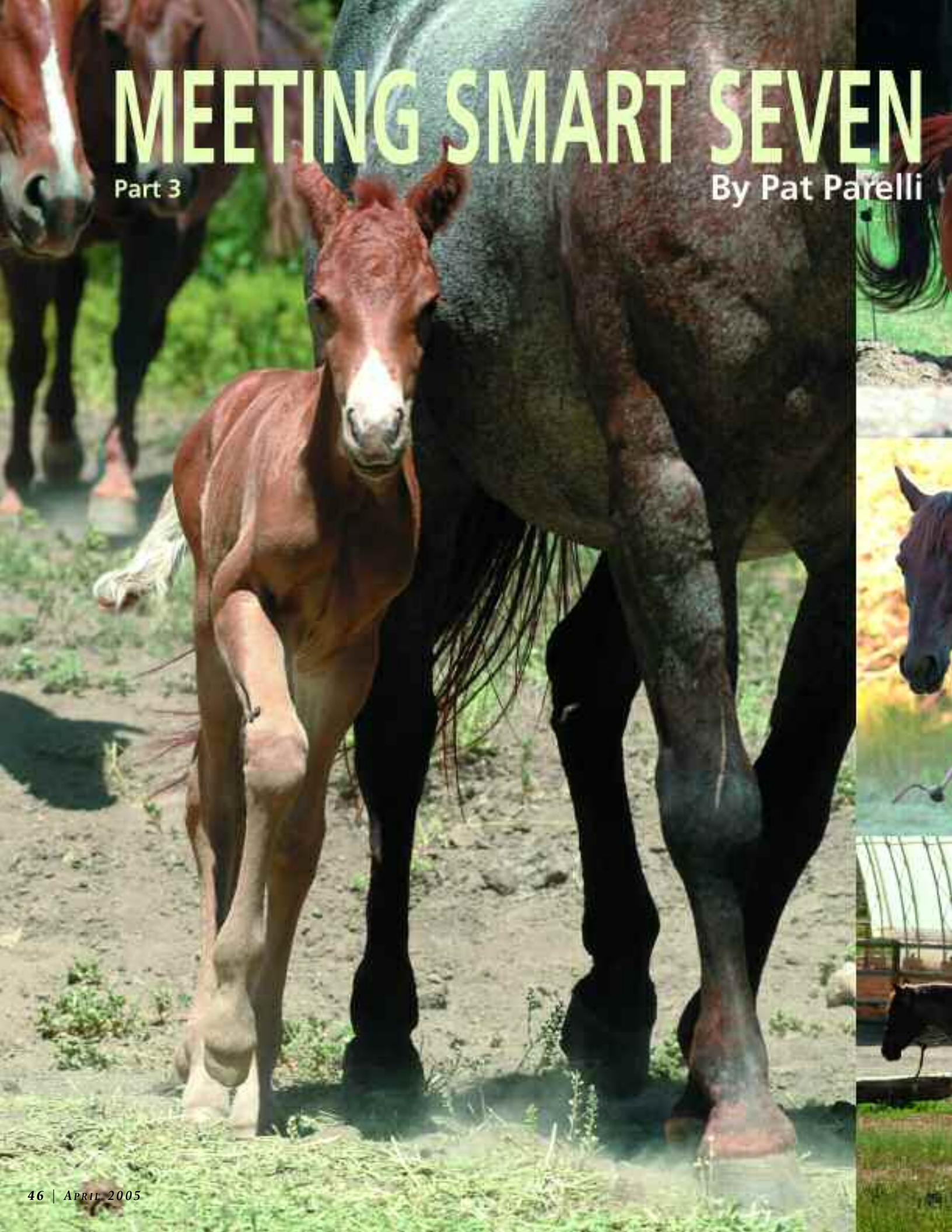
other stirrup without looking, if possible). Sit there for 30 seconds minimum (this is the hurry-up-and-wait stage). Be friendly. Smile. Don't go anywhere or you'll teach the horse the habit of moving as soon as you mount. Teach your horse to be still and polite by doing this every time you mount; it's a way to develop a good habit.

One last thing that gets horses good about being dismounted is that every time you dismount, do the same three-times drill (up-down, up-down, up-down). He'll learn to stand still while you smoothly dismount. 🐾

MEETING SMART SEVEN

Part 3

By Pat Parelli





60 HOURS OLD

One of the secrets with horses is learning to adjust to fit the situation. I was at the bottom of the hill with Scamp and Smart Seven this day, and then one of the other mares in the pasture came along and Scamp took off to the top of the hill, Smart Seven close behind. I thought, "Darn, I really wanted to do some fun things down here with Smart Seven." And then I thought, "Why don't I adjust to fit the situation and just ride Scamp down from the hill?"

So I hiked up the hill and got on Scamp bareback and rode down to where the cameras were. Smart Seven trotted right alongside his mama, never missing a stride and as bright as could be. Then he broke into a canter as we came out of the brush into the clearing. He even created his own tiny little dust cloud as he cantered along!

If we study horses in nature, we can learn to play with them, to emulate what they do, to do things that are just as natural to them as breathing air. So as I was riding Scamp, I played with Smart Seven so that he would start to understand human interaction.

Remember when I said that a Carrot Stick is about the same length as a horse's neck? Well, while I was riding Scamp I used my Carrot Stick to start to get Smart Seven ready for freestyle riding by using the stick to turn his neck and to follow a feel with his body, and to encourage him to go faster by lightly tapping the stick on his rump. He wasn't going to leave Scamp, so these signals were easy to apply by just riding the mare and using the stick on the foal as he traveled alongside.

It's always been my dream that I want to be so good with horses that even horses thought I was brilliant. Being good with horses is more than just what you do when you're riding, playing with them or even just leading them. The investment I've made in horses like Scamp has paid off – Smart Seven is her seventh foal and at 60 hours of age he can do more than a lot of aged horses. I want him to trust humans, and to want to be with humans. Horses want safety, comfort and play. If I can develop these "wants" to where the play comes in, and the foal can feel safe and comfortable around me – then we can play games with the foal that starts that interaction with humans.

There are only six things a horse can do besides stand still: Go forward, backward, right, left, up and down. Some horses can do all six at once! When we talk about a horse being confident, curious and sensitive, we want them to be like a gyroscope and be able to do any one of those six things as easily as the next – right to left, forward to backward. What happens with most people is that instead of the horse using the left side,

I hitch a Savvy String between two Carrot Sticks and stand in front of the foal with the string around his rump above his hocks. With a Carrot Stick in each of my hands, I walk backward to get the foal to follow me. I take the string and sticks off him, and he continues to follow me.



confident side of his brain to do these six things in a productive manner, the horse gets scared, mad, or disrespectful. You know the rest.

The four most important things a horse can do is follow, stop, back, yield the hindquarters and yield the forehand. So I ask Smart Seven to follow me by riding Scamp. Then I extend my arm out from my side while holding the Carrot Stick, allowing the attached Savvy String to form a big loop (the end of the string is in my hand). Instead of putting the loop over Smart Seven, I just let him walk up and put his head and neck into the loop. That allows him to have confidence and curiosity about the string and stick, rather than being forced into the loop.

Then I want him to go forward, back up and stop. I ride Scamp forward and of course the foal follows, but I still have the loop from the Savvy String around his neck. I ask Scamp to stop and the string stretches across Smart Seven's chest and he stops, too (*uuuuurrrrrttt!* – universal sound for stop). When I ask Scamp to back, the string applies a bit of pressure on the foal's chest and he backs in synchronicity with the mare. I do this two times with Smart Seven.

Then I ask the foal to yield the forehand by riding Scamp in a close circle around him. I ask him to disengage the hindquarters steadying his front end by carefully using the stick and string, and then continue to push the mare around the foal until he yields his hindquarters. It was just that simple. And remember, he's only 60 HOURS old!

My goal for Smart Seven is for him to be Level 4 on the ground by the time he has his first ride. I know how smart horses really are and how they learn how to learn. They either learn to give, yield and turn loose – or they learn how to take, take over, take off and take advantage of. We need to set it up at an early age so that they learn properly.

Someday, this foal is going to be like his mom and dad – a high performance horse. Everything we teach him at this age will become a part of his life. At this time in a foal's life, they're the most malleable – the first 168 hours. If we build rapport, trust and respect in our relationship with the foal at this age, we can get his attention and build a quality relationship.

76 HOURS OLD

I'm out in the pasture again right after a welcomed rainstorm with my son Caton, Scamp and Smart Seven. Caton and I are outfitted with long yellow rain slickers, and the foal is curious about this new wardrobe. Caton mentions that he thinks the foal's "barn name" should be Smarty.

I hitch a Savvy String between two Carrot Sticks and stand in front of the foal with the string around his rump above his hocks. With a Carrot Stick in each of my hands, I walk backward to get the foal to follow me. Caton has Scamp on a lead and is letting the mare just drift closely behind the foal. Smart Seven follows me, but his ears are definitely in tune with his mama behind him. I take the string and sticks off him, and he continues to follow me.

Then I got behind Smart Seven with the string out in front of him (not touching him), a stick in each hand, and start to drive him with my body and the two Carrot Sticks. Then I put the string on the ground in front of him and let him walk over it. I walk alongside him and put my hand on Seven's crest; if you love your horse, *feel* for your horse, and you can feel together. Don't just touch him, *feel of* him and *for* him and you'll feel together.

Caton gets on Scamp bareback and does "s" patterns right and left with Smart Seven at the mare's side, keeping up the pace. The foal turns when she turns, and stops when she stops. The foal is getting used to follow-

ing his mama with a rider on her back. Caton slides off Scamp and we kneel down with Smart Seven as the foal explores our raincoats, our fingers, our chests. I pick up the foal's right front leg and let it go in a blink of an eye. We softly, slowly and lightly run our hands all over Seven's body. He goes away for a moment, then comes back – it's his own form of approach and retreat.

That's enough for today. Today Smart Seven has learned to follow, stop, back, disengage his hindquarters and yield his forehand. All that, and he's 76 hours old!

84 HOURS OLD

He's getting stronger by the minute! Seems like every time Smart Seven suckles on Scamp, he gets bigger and stronger. In comparison to other foals, he's not the most robust I've ever encountered, however, so I'm a little easy on him – I adjust to fit the situation. I want my relationship with Seven to be like my relationship with Scamp, who thinks, "Oh boy, here comes that guy with the Winnies Cookies!"

Years ago I read a book by Maxwell Maltz called "Psycho Cybernetics." Maltz wrote about simulation, practicing in your mind, visualizing a positive outcome. I've always taken those concepts and applied them to horses, even when I was rodeoing. Simulation is a big part of what I want to do with Smart Seven.

I'd like to get Seven used to things that will happen to him in the future, like swinging a rope from the saddle. He needs to get used to the Friendly Game for a start. So I take my Carrot Stick with the Savvy String attached and swing it around my head as I ride Scamp and Seven follows alongside. Later on, Smart Seven probably won't even blink an eye as someone throws a rope at a cow from atop his back.

We need to know what the end product is so we know that the process is heading us toward that. So from process to product, we need to have a plan. Here's the plan: I want this foal someday to develop skills that will enhance his talents. Genetically, this horse is designed to be an extreme athlete – his dam and sire are great athletes with a lot of "cow." So he should excel in cutting or reining – lots of slide stops, spins, lead changes, being responsive to the rider. In order to do that, we have to teach the horse to be sensitive and to *make sense* of pressure. As you've heard me say before, pressure motivates but it's the release that teaches. Because horses are a precocious species, there's no difference between teaching a young foal to follow a feel and teaching an older horse the same thing. Of course the young horse is a juvenile and doesn't have the same stamina. But young horses are not stupid! They don't get smarter as they get older.

When I push the foal around with the Carrot Stick in zones 1 and 2, this simulation relates to when he will learn to neck rein later in life. I ask the foal to yield the forequarters by pushing on the neck; the nose, neck, shoulder and the front feet follow. Later in life, for a great spin, it's first the nose, then the neck, then the shoulder, then the front feet. Can you begin to understand the connections here with this young foal? We can start putting in elements of a relationship and then look to the future – all that's left in between is the process.

I take two Savvy Strings and teach him the principle of following a feel. I tie the two strings together, and place them around his rump and then crisscross them over his back at his shoulders. I stand in front of him, holding an end of the string in each hand. I ask him to come forward as I keep him between the two lines. The drive line is right where the ropes would go around his neck like a necklace; everything in front of the drive line turns him or slows him down. Everything behind the drive line speeds him up or disengages his hindquarters.

I kneel down in front of Seven and he explores my shirt and face. He's getting confident about going a little distance away from mom, and confident about being with me. I want him to think, then yield, using the left side of his brain. Then I bring the lines (that are around his rump and crossed over at his shoulders) under his jaw, cross them and bring them up to the bridge of his nose until they meet at the top of the nose. Then I twist them together to form a single line. He leads forward,

I think Seven has understood some of the principles; theory then becomes instinct. When horses understand these things, they know it by heart. When a horse learns anything, he thinks about it with the left side of the brain, then it becomes instinctual (right side of the brain).





I place the rope on his back behind his withers, down around his midline, with the lines coming up to his chest, between his front legs, to my hands in front of him. I ask him to come forward with a little pressure; this is where you can get in trouble if you don't keep the pressure firm. I walk to the foal's side and release the pressure when he puts his nose over the top of the string. That's what we want – the foal's "life" comes from behind, but he has to follow his nose. We want to get that message to his feet.

not terribly sure of the feel on his nose, but willing nonetheless. I stay away from putting pressure behind the ears, where a predator (like a lion) would find its "killing zone." If you've seen someone try to pull a foal along, you've probably seen the youngster get scared and flip over or jump up in the air and with their front legs try to protect that "kill zone."

I kneel down in front of Seven and drop the rope off him. Then I place it on his back behind his withers, down around his midline, with the lines coming up to his chest, between his front legs, to my hands in front of him. I ask him to come forward with a little pressure; this is where you can get in trouble if you don't keep the pressure firm. Understanding "hold" becomes important. Then I walk to the foal's side and release the pressure when he puts his nose over the top of the string. That's what we want – the foal's "life" comes from behind, but he has to follow his nose. We want to get that message to his feet; I want to lead his feet! As I move, it's also giving him a "target" to follow.

This little exercise also teaches him the principle of following a feel. It's all about responsiveness, and responsiveness comes from pressure. Now the foal, rather than bracing against my "hold," is following with lightness and responsiveness. Another added benefit here is that he's getting used to what a cinch would feel like. By the way, even though Caton has Scamp on a

lead this whole time, the mare is more interested in eating than anything else. She's becoming confident about this session.

After Seven gives my hat a once-over with his little lips, I ask one of our students to join us. Because I don't want Seven to only bond to me, and because I'm going to be gone from time to time, I ask a Parelli student, Jodi, to introduce herself to Seven. As we kneel at the foal's side, I show her how to hold one hand steady against his wither area as she uses long strokes over the rest of his body, including a long stroke from the jaw along the groove of the neck down to the chest. I also show her how to form a "corral" for the foal with her two outstretched arms.

I lead Seven without looking at him. He'll only get light if he knows what firmness is. Holding firm is important – it's not a pull and you can't go with him. Timing comes from feel – if I lead Seven without looking at him, it all comes from feel and then I don't reward the wrong things (no one has more feel than a blind man). I lead him until there is slack in the rope (I don't have to hold); then I quit. When he becomes curious, it's a great time to quit. Jodi takes him for a little walk and then takes him back to Scamp for a drink.

I think Seven has understood some of the principles about today; theory then becomes instinct. After a while when horses understand these things, they know it by heart. When a horse learns anything, he thinks about it with the left side of the brain, then it becomes instinctual (right side of the brain).

My great mentor, Tom Dorrance, said to me: "Never knock the curiosity out of a young horse." As I drove away that day, I thought about why he told me that one thing. Then it dawned on me – he had seen me knock the curiosity out of a horse. I didn't realize how important that was. Curiosity is what happens after confidence.

And then when you get dignity, then you have a chance for exuberance. I want this horse to be excited when he sees a cow, and says "Man, I couldn't wait for you to ask me to slide to a stop – let me run a little faster so I can stop harder. Spin? Sure! How fast? How perfect?" That's the exuberance we're looking for. And this is the perfect time to start, when these foals are just hours old.

All of this is why I encourage people to get Level 3 on the ground before they play with foals – most people teach horses to be non-responsive and dull.

So we'll continue this journey with Smart Seven. Most likely the next session (when he's a whopping 96 hours old or so) will be with tarps, a water crossing obstacle, and maybe even a trailer loading session! 🐾

Savvy Playground Obstacles: The Waterfall

With each new issue of Savvy Times, we'll feature an obstacle from the playgrounds at the Parelli Centers in Florida and Colorado.

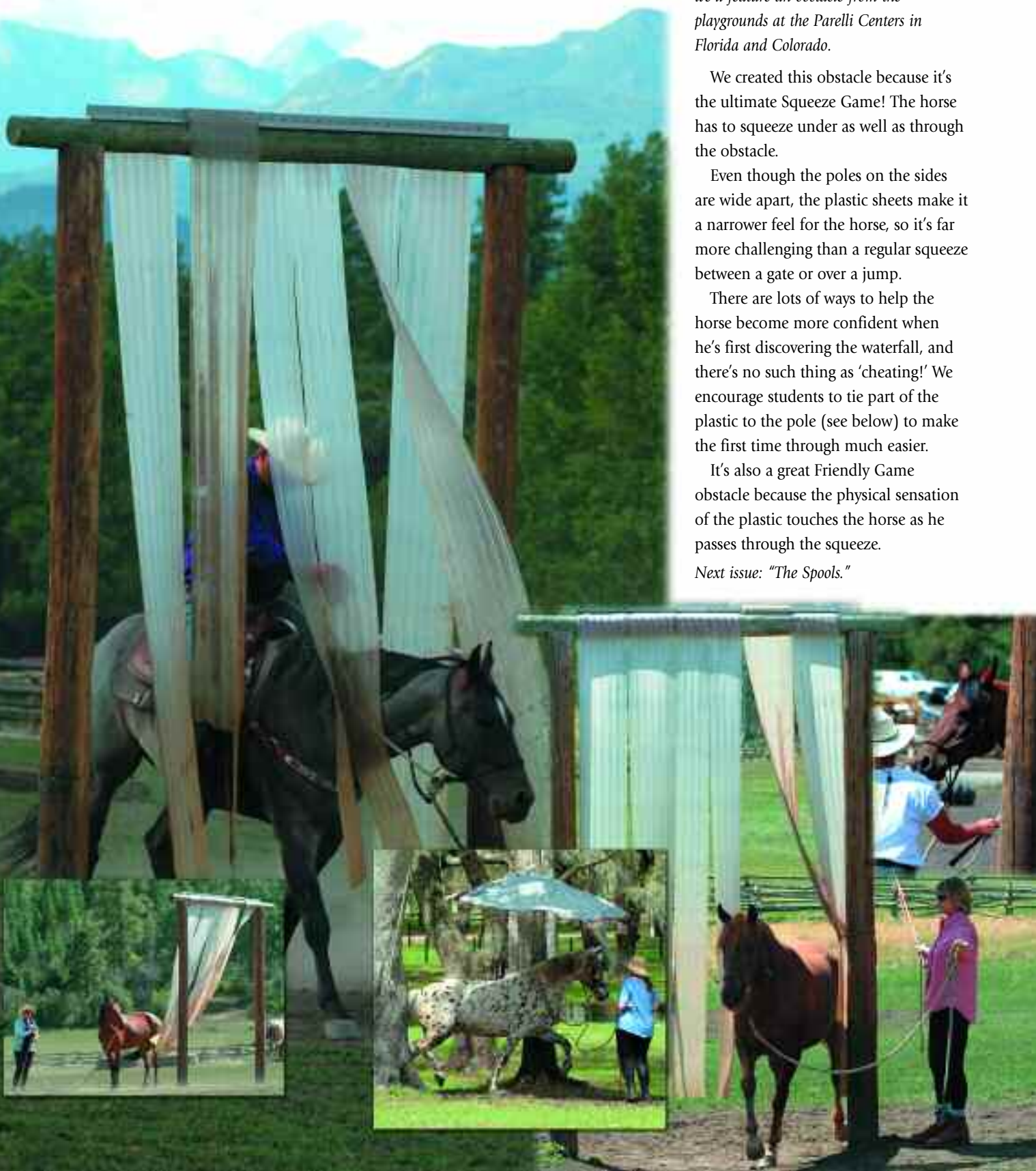
We created this obstacle because it's the ultimate Squeeze Game! The horse has to squeeze under as well as through the obstacle.

Even though the poles on the sides are wide apart, the plastic sheets make it a narrower feel for the horse, so it's far more challenging than a regular squeeze between a gate or over a jump.

There are lots of ways to help the horse become more confident when he's first discovering the waterfall, and there's no such thing as 'cheating!' We encourage students to tie part of the plastic to the pole (see below) to make the first time through much easier.

It's also a great Friendly Game obstacle because the physical sensation of the plastic touches the horse as he passes through the squeeze.

Next issue: "The Spools."





PAT PARELLI MAKES HORSE LOVER'S DREAM COME TRUE

Eighteen-year-old Teresa Gaskill begins each day with her pride and joy – a 1,100 pound gelding named Jazz. "He's really easygoing," Teresa says. "A very mellow fellow."

This love affair that began with one horse led to another, and another. And now, Teresa Gaskill's family owns eight. She handles the care and feeding of the herd, from mucking stalls to grooming to riding. Teresa has been riding horses for 12 years now, and has plenty of blue ribbons to show for it.

That's a fantastic feeling for a girl who struggled to walk.

America's first glimpse of Teresa Gaskill was as a United Way poster child. Like one of her older brothers, she was born with cerebral palsy, a disorder that weakens her leg muscles and affects her balance, and her parents knew she would face a long, hard road.

Her mother, Maggie Gaskill, says, "She's had to have her hips cut, the bone cut and rotated."

Because Teresa walked only on tip-toe (cerebral palsy often manifests in the inability to relax muscles), doctors injected Botox deep into her calf muscles to bring down her heels and improve her balance.

Now, at age 18, not even a cold winter drizzle and an inch of Michigan mud can keep Teresa from the stables.

Mounting her horse is no easy task. Teresa wills herself into the saddle. As for staying put, once she's up there, well, that's a whole other matter.

Teresa says, "When you love something as dearly as I do, you have got to get back on; you'd be crazy to give it up." After Teresa mounts, she says, "It's really exciting because no one can be in control of this animal except me."

Maggie notes, "Oh my gosh, I wouldn't have gotten back up on the horse, but she does it every time. She's fallen off every horse we have."

Teresa knows firsthand how cruel the world can be toward people with disabilities. She says, "It's very difficult to handle being looked at in certain ways, viewed as certain things."

But if humans sometimes let her down, horses lift her up. "The horses make you feel special," Teresa says. "That's the best thing."

CBS's "The Early Show" learned about Teresa through a



Left to right: Sharon Scutt (Teresa's grandmother), Teresa Gaskill, Jack and Maggie Gaskill (Teresa's parents), Pat Parelli and CBS "The Early Show" co-anchor Rene Syler. (photograph courtesy of CBS News)

"Week of Wishes" letter from her grandmother, Sharon Scutt of Russellville, Arkansas.

And on Monday morning, February 21, Teresa and her parents Jack and Maggie thought they were invited to the television show to talk about horseback riding and therapy. Imagine their surprise when they saw Grandma Sharon on the set.

Because, you see, Teresa's grandmother had written the show, requesting that Teresa's dream of going to the Pat Parelli Center in Colorado come true.

In the letter to CBS, Sharon wrote:

"I have never heard Teresa complain about her disease. I used to pick her up from school and take her horseback riding for therapy. It would break my heart to watch her try to keep up with the other children. Teresa is an avid horse rider. My wish is to send my very special granddaughter to Parelli's in Colorado." (Teresa has been studying Level 1 and is a big fan of Pat's.)

And so that special morning Pat Parelli strode onto the CBS television set and surprised Teresa, making her life-long dream come true.

After the hugs and tears, Pat said, "First of all, we have a school for horse lovers and we teach people how to use love, language, and leadership in equal doses. We'll teach you to be a leader for horses."

With tears in her eyes, Teresa Gaskill was in shock. "I am, I am, like, not even – I can't even express this."

So this summer at the Pat Parelli Center in Colorado, when you see a pretty teenager with a smile on her face that she can't erase, it's probably Teresa. Go over and say hello. Your life will undoubtedly be enriched.

PAT PARELLI IN AMERICAN COWBOY MAGAZINE

The March/April issue of that lovely glossy magazine had a great feature on Pat Parelli. You can order copies by visiting www.americancowboy.com.

WELCOME NEW SAVVY CLUB LIFETIME MEMBERS!

Adding to our growing list of Lifetime Members, we'd like to welcome Dr. Grady Carter and his wife Devvy, Collette and Sid Hendricks, Sharon Prindel, Ray Wiseman, Debra Abraham, Mike Boso and the Kevin James family.



SAILING SMART STRUTS HIS STUFF!

As we mentioned in the last issue of Savvy Times, Pat Parelli is proud of his 25% ownership of Craig Johnson's reining stallion, Sailing Smart. Well, guess what! Todd Crawford

aboard Sailing Smart has won both the Reining and Cowhorse/Fence Work (he marked a 150 down the fence!) in the 1st go-round of the Worlds Greatest Horseman competition! Sailing Smart is the only horse to win two of the four divisions. And he finished 7th in the Finals! But wait! There's more!

SPECIAL SAILING SMART BREEDING FEE TO SAVVY CLUB MEMBERS ONLY!

Pat Parelli and Craig Johnson are offering Savvy Club members only a special breeding rate to their stallion Sailing Smart (1992 son of Smart Chic Olena out of Sailing Doll by NRHA Hall of Fame Topsail Cody; Sailing Smart was a member of the 2000 and 2002 USET Gold Medal Reining Team). The special Savvy Club fee to breed to Sailing Smart is only \$1000 – a savings of \$500 over the regular fee of \$1500! (Stud farm fees are extra.) Sailing Smart is standing at Todd Crawford's ranch in Blanchard, Oklahoma (30 minutes from Oklahoma City), so call the Crawfords at 405/344-6692 for details or e-mail Pam Crawford at pam@crawfordstallionservices.com. Photos and details about Sailing Smart can be found at www.crawfordstallionservices.com. You'll be asked for your Savvy Club membership number when you call, so have it handy. Just think – this time next year you could have a Sailing Smart baby on the ground!

NETHERLANDS GAINS 3-STAR INSTRUCTOR

Congratulations to Eddy Modde for becoming the first-ever 3-Star Instructor in the Netherlands. Well done!

FINALIST FOR EQUINE INDUSTRY VISION AWARD

Pat Parelli has made the finals in the 2005 Equine Industry Vision Award sponsored by American Horse Publications and Pfizer Animal Health. The award recognizes innovation, leadership and service. The committee selected the following finalists (listed in alphabetical order): Stanley F. Bergstein; John Ryan Gaines; Douglas Herthel, DVM; Matthew Mackay-Smith, DVM; David O'Connor, and Pat Parelli.

Finalists were judged on their performance in relation to the achievement(s) cited and their demonstration of the following attributes and abilities: 1) The vision and innovation of a true pioneer; 2) Leadership, commitment, dedication and willingness to serve; 3) Original and effective ideas and/or products, services, programs; 4) High moral, ethical and professional standards.

Stay tuned for the announcement of the winner!

NEW VOLUNTEER PROGRAM FOR TOUR

Our Tour Team has put together a new Volunteer Program for the Parelli 2005 Tour. Simply go to www.parelli.com, click on USA Tour, look for the headline

"Volunteers" then click on Volunteer Application within the paragraph under "Volunteers." That will tell you all about what it means to be a volunteer at our tours. Thanks for your participation!



Volunteers at our first stop in Clemson, South Carolina

RAY HUNT APPRECIATION CLINIC

Linda and Pat Parelli, Neil Pye, Caton Parelli and eight top Parelli instructors/students will participate in the Ray Hunt Appreciation Clinic at Ft. Worth, Texas, April 2 and 3. Of the 40 spots in the Horsemanship Class, Parelli will fill 12 of them. As many of you know, Ray Hunt is one of Pat's mentors, and I'm sure the Parelli group will make Pat proud in front of his teacher. We'll let you know more about what happened during this tribute in the next issue of Savvy Times.

A Level 2 Journey: Part 2

with Yvonne Wilcox

Date & Hours	Activity	Level/ Lesson studied		Comments
		L2	Stage 1	
15 min.	Positive Reflexes			- Playing with this in every session,
	On Line: Win			confident games are working well, feel
	Games 1, 2, 3, 4			ready to move on to next lesson.
20 min.	Win the Circling		Stage 1	- Escada seems to be counting the laps and
	Game			always stops at 3. Need to do many more
				sessions on this. Plus she plays up when
				she gets behind me.
15 min.	Win the Sideways		Stage 1	- Hindquarters tend to drag alot, she
	Game			doesn't do it consistently well. Needs more
				practice in every session. (See photo!)
15 min.	Win the Squeeze		Stage 1	- Only took a very short time for her to get
	Game			really good at this! Yay!
-	Seven Games &		Stage 1	- Not going there until we have L3 On Line
	Riding			and Liberty achieved!

Date & Hours	Activity	Level/ Lesson studied		Comments
		L2	Stage 2	
15 min.	Yo-Yo on the			- I was surprised at how quickly she picked
	22-foot Line			this up. I think it's because we've done so
				much Yo-Yoing that the concept of going
				backwards is really easy now.
30 min.	Circling on the		Stage 2	- "More line, more laps" [as the Pocket
	22-foot Line			Guide states] was a license for my Arab to
				go right brain! I didn't take it slow
				enough, she went all the way out,
				went at a million miles an hour, and
				got away from me. Had to catch her and
				play lots of Friendly Game. Will go
				back and study this lesson better before
				our next session plus use obstacles to help
				her do it more left brain.

Student: Vonni [Yvonne Wilcox]

Horse: Escada [Kenlyn Muscata]

Age/Breed: 5-year-old Bay Arabian Mare

Levels achieved: Level 1 through self-assessment with the Level 1 Pocket Guides.

Levels Goal: To complete Levels 2 and 3 on the ground before trying to achieve Levels 2 and 3 in the saddle.

In the January issue of Savvy Times, we began sharing Yvonne's Level 2 journey with Escada. She talked about snappier Yo-Yo back-ups, choosing not to ride until she achieved more savvy on the ground, "extreme" Friendly Game, discovering what phases really meant — among other "ah-ha's!"



I need to get more savvy if I'm ever going to understand that lagging hindquarters in the Sideways Game!

What's your plan for getting Escada to do more than three laps in the Circling Game?

Well, I went back and consulted the Pocket Guide again to see what it said.

The most important thing I found relating to this was "The better your *Send*, the better your *Allow* will be."

I can now see that my send was not meaningful. She didn't realize that the object was to go when I pointed my finger. I've seen Pat play 'tag' when he plays the Circling Game with the new horses at tour stops. Thinking of this as a game of 'tag' rather than a punishment "you must do four laps or else..." will help me a lot. In the Level 2 program it asks for a long Phase 1 and a quick Phase 2,3,4. If I follow these instructions Escada can feel like a winner because she'll have enough time to figure out what I'm asking.

If she plays up behind you during the Circling Game, what inspires her to not play up when she's in front of you?

There wasn't anything about this in the Pocket Guides or at the Virtual Instructor on the web, so I phoned my Parelli Instructor.

She said that my horse has a very exuberant nature, and really enjoys playing up and having fun! She said to not be concerned and to just keep moving through the program to keep it interesting and progressive for Escada. She said the best way to do this is to use obstacles. Obstacles would help

me not just do boring circles but would give Escada something to think about.

This was really interesting to hear this, thank you editor for asking me this question! I had been thinking that this was 'disrespectful behavior' and was something I needed to 'correct.' So I must admit I had my own little 'attitude' about this. Knowing this helps me to honor Escada's exuberance and not mistake it for disobedience.

Hearing this from my instructor made me relax about the whole thing and remember that this is not about having a perfect 'robot', it's about having a relationship and an adventure with my horse.

In the Sideways Game, does Escada drag her hindquarters regardless of the speed at which you play the game? In both directions?

Yes and yes! As you can see in the photo above, she doesn't look too excited about the whole thing. Now that I look at the photo I can see I've not progressed out of Level 1 Sideways Game! I look like I'm in a perpetual Phase 2-3 stance, rather than long Phase 1, quick 2-3-4 as the Pocket Guides state for Level 2.

From what my instructor said about how obstacles make the games more interesting, I can see that if I played sideways over a pole or a barrel it would be more interesting for Escada, and she would need to straighten up to maneuver over the obstacle. She can be crooked while there's

nothing to straddle, but if she had to straddle something to go sideways she'd thank me for helping her be straight! It would be more like helping her go sideways, rather than being 'critical'.

What would you do differently to avoid what happened in your first session with the Circling Game on a 22-foot Line?

First, I'd have studied the lesson better before trying it! I get too excited and want to do things too quickly.

If I had stuck to the lesson and started at just 12-feet of the 22, then 13-feet etc., she would not have gone so right brain. I'd also find some obstacles to play with so she had things to think about while she's out on the circle. I'm not going to just go out and play boring Seven Games anymore! I'm going to use obstacles to make it more interesting for the both of us.

The biggest thing I've learned from this is about my attitude of wanting the end result without investing time on all the stuff in between. For some reason the goal had become more important than the journey. When did I start thinking that if I can't lay my horse down, ride bridle-less, or do lead changes, that I'm not having fun?

So I've taken a deep breath and a fresh start, and I'm ready to go out and just play where we're at, have fun and be interested in the lesson we're studying. I can't wait for this weekend and our next play session! 🐾

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